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JUNE 29, 2015

THE NEW YORKER

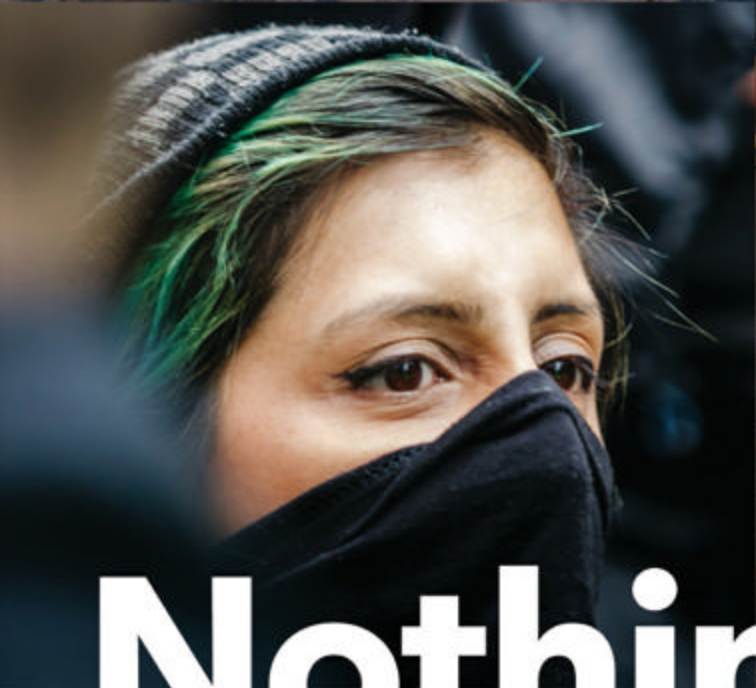




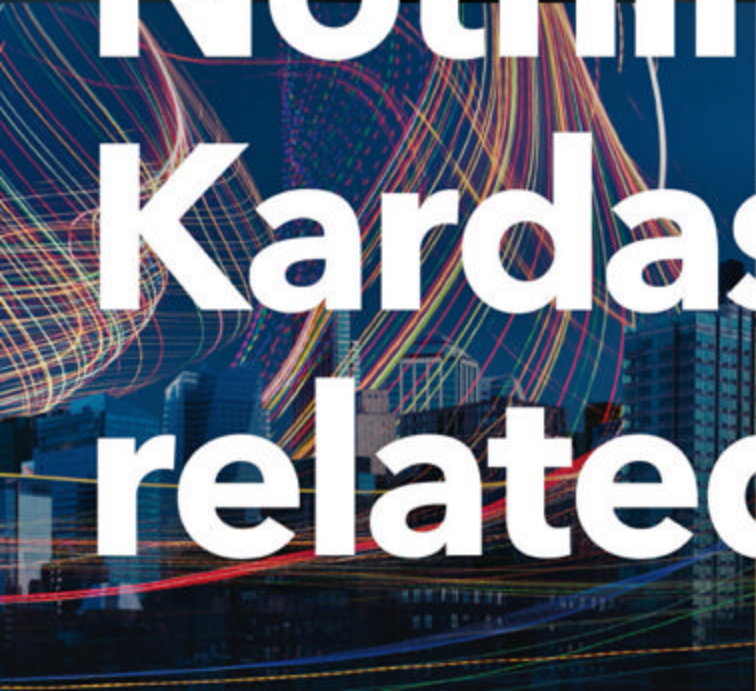
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THE NEW YORKER

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EVERYTHING IN THE MAGAZINE, AND MORE THAN FIFTEEN ORIGINAL STORIES A DAY.

ALSO:

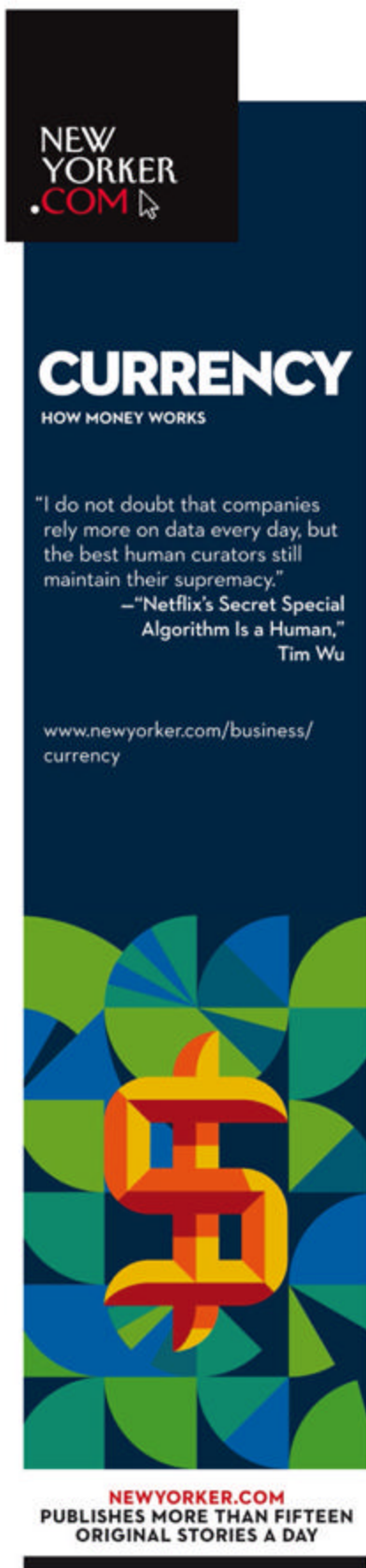
DAILY COMMENT / CULTURAL COMMENT: Opinion and analysis by Evan Osnos, Sarah Larson, and others.

PODCASTS: On the Political Scene, Connie Bruck and Jane Mayer talk with Dorothy Wickenden about Senator Feinstein and her investigation into torture during the War on Terror. Plus, on Out Loud, Nick Paumgarten, Alec Wilkinson, and David Remnick join Amelia Lester and David Haglund in a discussion of the Grateful Dead.

PAGE-TURNER: Criticism, contention, and conversation about books and the writing life.

VIDEO: A video of Elizabeth Streb's dance company rehearsing "Ascension." Plus, the latest short film in The Screening Room series, "Actor Seeks Role," featuring Alex Karpovsky as an aspiring young actor with a part-time job performing the symptoms of various diseases for student doctors.

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CURRENCY
HOW MONEY WORKS

"I do not doubt that companies rely more on data every day, but the best human curators still maintain their supremacy."
—"Netflix's Secret Special Algorithm Is a Human,"
Tim Wu

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FIXING HEALTH CARE

As a physician in training, I have witnessed the pervasive culture of over-testing and overdiagnosis in our health-care system, described in Atul Gawande's article ("Overkill," May 11th). But there are also several countervailing forces that he does not mention. The Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education now emphasizes high-value care as a learning priority for medical residents, and the American Board of Internal Medicine Foundation has created a campaign, called Choosing Wisely, to empower patients to initiate conversations with their physicians on this topic. More than seventy medical-specialty societies are partners in the campaign, which is designed to promote discussions about often unnecessary aspects of medical care. The initiative does not contain mandates, and all patients should be aware that there is a professionally validated resource to help them begin this conversation.

Wade Iams, M.D.

*Vanderbilt University Medical Center
Nashville, Tenn.*

Gawande rightly points out that Americans get tests, drugs, and operations that don't make them better and cost billions of dollars. But it is worth noting two factors, in addition to those that Gawande mentions, responsible for this pervasive approach to health care: the corporatization of medicine, and a fear of lawsuits. For the most part, health-care institutions enforce a corporate-style model of productivity, which has turned health-care providers into assembly-line workers, under constant pressure to manage many patients in a limited amount of time, in order to generate the most revenue possible. In addition, a fear of lawsuits compels physicians to see each medical decision and patient-care interaction through a legal filter. Physicians who are sued become hypervigilant, and practice defensive medicine, which costs more. Patients with headaches get CT scans to rule out tumors, and patients with viral infections are

given antibiotics out of an abundance of caution. The corporate structure is here to stay, and legal oversight is necessary for patient protection—both require significant reform to change the status quo and to achieve a higher standard of practicing good medicine.

Sandeep Khurana, M.B.B.S.

*Associate Professor of Medicine,
Georgia Regents University
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Gawande reports the welcome news that health-care-delivery systems and financing innovations since the enactment of the Affordable Care Act portend dramatic reductions in unnecessary medical care in this country. Yet an avalanche of fraud continues to harm both patients and health-care programs. During my years as the chief Obama Administration official at the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services responsible for fighting health-care fraud, I saw firsthand how medical fraud injures patients and diverts money away from productive uses. Competent physicians become submerged in America's "profit-maximizing medical culture," as the article mentions. Some provide unimaginable amounts of unnecessary care; others participate in scams that exploit a system of wasteful health-care spending. Fortunately, powerful anti-fraud provisions in the A.C.A. and other initiatives have revoked the billing privileges of tens of thousands of providers, and all Medicare claims are now screened before being paid. These measures, combined with continued financial incentives for whistle-blowers and stronger criminal penalties, will help stop the hemorrhaging of money from our health-care system and better protect all patients.

Peter P. Budetti, M.D.

Washington, D.C.

Letters should be sent with the writer's name, address, and daytime phone number via e-mail to themail@newyorker.com. Letters may be edited for length and clarity, and may be published in any medium. We regret that owing to the volume of correspondence we cannot reply to every letter or return letters.

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One-Way Ticket: Jacob Lawrence's Migration Series and Other Visions of the Great Movement North

Now
on View



Panel 42 of 60

They also made it very difficult for migrants leaving the South. They often went to railroad stations and arrested the Negroes wholesale, which in turn made them miss their trains.

—Jacob Lawrence

MoMA.org/onewayticket

Organized by The Museum of Modern Art, New York, and The Phillips Collection, Washington, DC, in collaboration with the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.



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Jacob Lawrence, *The Migration Series*, 1940–41. Panel 42. Casein tempera on hardboard. The Museum of Modern Art, New York. Gift of Mrs. David M. Levy. © 2015 The Jacob and Gwendolyn Knight Lawrence Foundation, Seattle/Artists Rights Society (ARS), New York

MOMA



JUNE 2015 WEDNESDAY 24TH THURSDAY 25TH FRIDAY 26TH SATURDAY 27TH SUNDAY 28TH MONDAY 29TH TUESDAY 30TH

EVERY SUMMER, CARAMOOR, the most elegant of the Northeastern music festivals, offers concerts devoted to opera, orchestral music, roots music, and jazz. But since the festival's founding, at the close of the Second World War, chamber music has been a vital part of the enterprise. In recent years, the quietly charismatic cellist Edward Arron (pictured above, with his wife, the pianist Jeewon Park) has been a major player here; this week, he joins several fellow-alumni of the festival's prestigious young-instrumentalists program in one of his "Edward Arron and Friends" concerts. They perform two intimately connected pieces: chamber versions of Strauss's "Metamorphosen," a threnody originally written for string orchestra, and of Beethoven's Symphony No. 3, "Eroica," which Strauss quotes in his own work.

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Palace

THE AUDIENCE

Schoenfeld. Through June 28.

THE CURIOUS INCIDENT OF THE DOG IN THE NIGHT-TIME

Ethel Barrymore

FINDING NEVERLAND

Lunt-Fontanne

FISH IN THE DARK

Cort

THE FLICK

Barrow Street Theatre

FUN HOME

Circle in the Square

GHOST STORIES

Atlantic Stage 2. Through June 28. (Reviewed in this issue.)

GUARDS AT THE TAJ

Atlantic Theatre Company

HAND TO GOD

Booth

HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH

Belasco

HEISENBERG

City Center Stage II

IT SHOULD HAVE BEEN YOU

Brooks Atkinson

THE KING AND I

Vivian Beaumont

THE OLD MASTERS

Flea. Through June 28.

ON THE TOWN

Lyric

ON THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

American Airlines Theatre

PRELUDES

Claire Tow

THE QUALMS

Playwrights Horizons

SOMETHING ROTTEN!

St. James

THE SOUND AND THE FURY

Public

10 OUT OF 12

SoHo Rep

WOLF HALL: PARTS ONE & TWO

Winter Garden

OPENINGS AND PREVIEWS

Happy Days

Tony Shalhoub and Brooke Adams star in the Samuel Beckett play, directed by Andrei Belgrader. In previews. Opens June 29. (Flea, 41 White St. 212-352-3101.)

Ice Factory 2015

The festival of new works kicks off its twenty-second year with "Idiot," Robert Lyons and Kristin Marting's adaptation of Dostoyevsky. Opens June 24. (New Ohio Theatre, 154 Christopher St. 888-596-1027.)

A New Brain

The "Encores! Off-Center" series begins with this 1998 musical by William Finn and James Lapine, about a songwriter who is diagnosed with a serious brain condition. Jonathan Groff, Dan Fogler, Aaron Lazar, and Ana Gasteyer star. June 24-27. (City Center, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

Of Good Stock

Manhattan Theatre Club's Lynne Meadow directs a play by Melissa Ross, in which a novelist's three grown daughters (Heather Lind, Jennifer Mudge, and Alicia Silverstone) reunite at their family home on Cape Cod. In previews. Opens June 30. (City Center Stage I, 131 W. 55th St. 212-581-1212.)

SeaWife

Naked Angels presents a concert-play by Seth Moore and the indie-folk group the Lobbyists, directed by Liz Carlson, about a young sailor who becomes a hero of the whaling industry. In previews. Opens June 25. (South Street Seaport Museum, 12 Fulton St., at Water St. 800-838-3006.)

Shows for Days

A new play by Douglas Carter Beane ("The Little Dog Laughed") traces the playwright's early experiences in community theatre, at a small Pennsylvania playhouse filled with big personalities. Patti LuPone and Michael Urie star in Jerry Zaks's production. In previews. Opens June 29. (Mitzi E. Newhouse, 150 W. 65th St. 212-239-6200.)

The Weir

The Irish Rep revives Conor McPheerson's 1997 drama, directed by Ciarán O'Reilly, set in a rural Irish pub. Previews begin June 30. (DR2, at 103 E. 15th St. 212-727-2737.)

NOW PLAYING

Doctor Faustus

Legend has it that Elizabethan-era actors frequently panicked while performing Christopher Marlowe's play—convinced that, when the performer playing Mephistopheles entered, real devils came onstage, too. Such potent theatrical danger is, alas, lacking in Andrei Belgrader and David Bridel's new adaptation,

starring Chris Noth as the infamous scholar who sells his soul for knowledge and power. The production is intermittently entertaining: Belgrader, who also directs, plays up the comic subplot with pratfalls, wacky audience participation, and obedient devils in red pajamas. But silliness can become a crutch, and neither Belgrader nor Noth confronts the grim side of this tragedy about temptation and moral choice. While the supporting cast is excellent—especially Zach Grenier as Mephistopheles—Noth seems embarrassed by his doublet and hose, and remains a vague, doofy Faustus even when surrendering to Lucifer himself. (Classic Stage Company, 136 E. 13th St. 866-811-4111.)

Gloria

Branden Jacobs-Jenkins's harrowing comedy opens on an unlucky four-leaf clover of cubicles, where three magazine assistants and an intern gripe about the editorial hierarchy, furtively plan their literary futures, and sidestep the office "freak," Gloria (Jeanine Serralles). Jacobs-Jenkins, a former assistant at *The New Yorker*, has a keen ear for the micro-aggressions of office banter, and for the peculiarities of ambition in an industry where every life experience is a potential book deal. But he's less interested in satire than in hard-won truths, which he teases out by way of a gut-wrenching turn of plot, just this side of tasteless. Evan Cabnet's production navigates the tonal shifts with aplomb, aided by a smart, shape-shifting cast. Particularly good is Ryan Spahn, whose Dean is a portrait of thwarted entitlement—a well-educated infant who is finally, belatedly, forced to confront something real. (Vineyard, 108 E. 15th St. 212-353-0303.)

Significant Other

The playwright Joshua Harmon gave the Roundabout a hit with "Bad Jews," in 2013, and his new play is likely to burnish that success. Crisply directed by Trip Cullman, it centers on Jordan (Gideon Glick), the only guy in a quartet of close friends in their late twenties. One by one, the women (Sas Goldberg, Lindsay Mendez, and Carra Patterson) acquire husbands, inevitably affecting the dynamics of the group. The most emotionally longing of the four, Jordan feels abandoned by his support group as he struggles to find a man of his own. Harmon mixes boisterous hilarity with resentment and hurt, all energetically and expertly performed. Providing tender balance to this youthful angst is Barbara Barrie, as Jordan's grandma. Barrie and Glick, actors a couple of generations apart, slow things down in these scenes, finding lovely, touching humor and humanity. (Laura Pels, 111 W. 46th St. 212-719-1300.)

The Spoils

The writer and performer Jesse Eisenberg plays characters who are

sometimes odious and generally riddled with spite and competitiveness, but girls like him anyway, because he's an outsider. In "The Spoils," he has written his biggest play to date, and his most interesting. Eisenberg plays Ben, a former New York University film student who lives in a high-rise with a Nepalese roommate, Kalyan (Kunal Nayyar). As a boy, he had a crush on Sarah (Erin Darke), who is now involved with Ted (Michael Zegen). When Ben has them over for a Nepalese meal, it's less an act of generosity than a ploy to figure out how to get Ted out of the way. The New Group's Scott Elliott has directed the piece with real insight into Ben, and into what coupling looks like from the island of Ben's crazy hatred and isolation. (Pershing Square Signature Center, 480 W. 42nd St. 212-279-4200. Through June 28.)

The Tempest

Sam Waterston first played Prospero for the New York Shakespeare Festival in 1974, when he was thirty-three and likely more suited to Ferdinand, the love-struck youth. Now in his seventies, Waterston plays the sorcerer as an old man itching to get out of retirement; he offsets his natural avuncular sweetness with spasms of fury—less a tempest than a partly cloudy sky, with occasional T-storms. Michael Greif's staging, for Shakespeare in the Park, accentuates the play's tight-knit power struggles, whether among the shipwrecked nobles of Milan or between Prospero and his island subordinates, the spirit Ariel (Chris Perfetti, dressed for the White Party) and the mud-smeared monster Caliban (Louis Cancelmi). It's only after intermission, when the sun goes down, that the production gives itself over to enchantment, with glowing blue orbs and extravagant masques. (Delacorte, Central Park. Enter at 81st St. at Central Park W. 212-967-7555.)

The Twentieth-Century Way

Set in an empty California theatre around 1914, Tom Jacobson's exceptional play tells the story of Brown (Will Bradley, a fantastic performer) and Warren (Robert Mammana, who overdoes it by shouting too much). They're actors who've been hired by the Long Beach Police Department to entrap and arrest gay men in private clubs and public changing rooms. There's a work light onstage, and a rack of clothes—disguises that help the characters express their true selves, which might include being homosexual, too. For about a hundred minutes, the two men engage in a dialogue about power: how to entrap not only all those skewered gay men but each other. Though the director, Michael Michetti, treats the text a trifle too naïvely, the production gives us an opportunity to hear the playwright's very distinct talk. (Rattlestick, 224 Waverly Pl. 866-811-4111.)

ART



Susan Cianciolo's show at the Bridget Donahue gallery is a memoir in the form of a *Wunderkammer*.

BOXING DAYS

A creative free spirit contains herself on the Lower East Side.

“LET THERE BE FASHION, down with art,” Max Ernst wrote in 1920, in a Dadaist portfolio that pictured an artist in the guise of a tailor. One of the most enchanting shows of the early summer—at the terrific new Bridget Donahue gallery, at 99 Bowery—is by Susan Cianciolo, who has been bridging the worlds of fashion and art in New York for twenty years. In 2001, at the height of her success as a designer—her clothes were selling at Barney’s and had been prominently featured in *Vogue*—Cianciolo inverted Ernst’s fiat, dropping out of the rag trade to become the artist she already was.

In 1995, after stints with Badgley Mischka and Kim Gordon’s X-girl line, Cianciolo launched her own label, Run. It quickly gained a cult following for its willfully homespun garments and friends-and-family approach, in which sewing circles trumped sweatshops, collaborators ranged from Cianciolo’s grandmother to Chloë Sevigny, and distinctions between bespoke, ready-to-wear, and do-it-yourself were a blur. The themes of Run’s collections were quirky, verging on twee; one season, the muses were dust bunnies. The runway shows were just as ludic, staged in art galleries and tea salons. (Cianciolo’s first big art project turned a gallery *into* a tea salon, with a debt to the culinary Conceptualists Gordon Matta-Clark and Rirkrit Tiravanija.) Run was achingly hip, and cool-girl aspiration no doubt played a role in its rise, but authenticity drove its success. It was also part of a Zeitgeist: the style-minded art groups Bernadette Corporation and Art Club 2000

formed around the same time, and Andrea Zittel’s sustainable-fashion Gesamtkunstwerk, A-Z, now based in Joshua Tree, was thriving in Brooklyn.

In the show at Donahue, thirty curio-filled cardboard “kits” rest unpretentiously atop textiles on the gallery floor. It’s a portable survey of Cianciolo’s career, revealing a hunter-gatherer of the flea market and an inveterate archivist of her own process. They’re the shamanic-punk heirs to a lineage of inside-the-box thinkers whose most famous son is Joseph Cornell. (Duchamp’s “Boîte-en-valise,” a retrospective that fits in a suitcase, and the Fluxus multiples known as “Fluxkits” also come to mind.) Guided tours of the kits’ contents are conducted by Donahue on request. Among their treasures: slippers covered in downy feathers, photographs, vintage bloomers, sketches, butterfly wings sewn from linen, a crocheted bikini, stuffed-satin stars, and dolls with wooden-bead heads and Popsicle-stick appendages (made in cahoots with Lilac, the artist’s daughter).

Cianciolo may have turned her back on the business of fashion, but clothing is in her DNA (she now designs one-of-a-kind pieces and teaches at Pratt). As Donahue said recently, while extracting a gossamer child’s cardigan from the depths of one kit for a visitor, “Susan pledges allegiance to the outfit.” Near the entrance to the show, a wall is lined with the costumes Cianciolo designed for a recent German production of “Hamlet,” which paid homage to the coruscating filmmaker Jack Smith, himself no stranger to fantastic outfits. On June 30, the gallery celebrates a new book on that project, with an event co-hosted by the Gladstone gallery.

—Andrea K. Scott

MUSEUMS SHORT LIST METROPOLITAN MUSEUM

"Navigating the West: George Caleb Bingham and the River." Through Sept. 20.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

"Zoe Leonard: Analogue." Opens June 27.

MOMA PSI

"Simon Denny: The Innovator's Dilemma." Through Sept. 7.

GUGGENHEIM MUSEUM

"Doris Salcedo." Opens June 26.

WHITNEY MUSEUM

"America Is Hard to See." Through Sept. 27.

BROOKLYN MUSEUM

"Zanele Muholi: Isibonelo/Evidence." Through Nov. 1.

FRICK COLLECTION

"Leighton's Flaming June." Through Sept. 6.

MORGAN LIBRARY & MUSEUM

"Alice: 150 Years of Wonderland." Opens June 26.

QUEENS MUSEUM

"After Midnight: Indian Modernism to Contemporary India, 1947/1997." Through Sept. 13.

GALLERIES SHORT LIST CHELSEA

Kim Gordon
303 Gallery
507 W. 24th St.
212-255-1121.
Through July 24.

Jack Pierson
Cheim & Read
547 W. 25th St.
212-242-7727.
Opens June 25.

Ruth Rott
Kreps
535 W. 22nd St.
212-741-8849.
Opens June 25.

Michael Smith
Greene Naftali
508 W. 26th St.
212-463-7770.
Opens June 25.

DOWNTOWN

Sadie Laska
Canada
333 Broome St.
212-925-4631.
Through July 10.

**Jenny Monick /
Thomas Kovachevich**
Callicoon
49 Delancey St.
212-219-0326.
Opens June 24.

**"These Are Not
My Horses"**
Fuentes
55 Delancey St.
212-577-1201.
Through July 23.

MUSEUMS AND LIBRARIES

Guggenheim Museum

"Storylines: Contemporary Art at the Guggenheim"

This mishmash of contemporary art from the museum's collection purports to showcase a renewed interest in narrative after decades of avant-garde reticence—the Guggenheim, after all, was originally named the Museum of Non-Objective Painting. It begins with works by some nineties all-stars, including Catherine Opie's photographic self-portraits and images from Matthew Barney's "Cremaster" series. From there, however, the show becomes very reliant on language: Glenn Ligon's text paintings, a letter handwritten by the father of the conceptual artist Danh Vo, a transposition into Braille of a performance by Gerard & Kelly. The curators also invited thirty writers to respond to the art works; the results disappoint. In one instance, Felix Gonzalez-Torres's shimmering gold-beaded curtain, widely understood as a memento mori relating to AIDS, finds John Banville musing on an afternoon by the Mediterranean. Through Sept. 9.

New Museum

"Albert Oehlen: Home and Garden"

Oehlen is the foremost painter of the era that has seen painting decline as the chief medium of new art. It's a dethronement that he honestly registers and oddly celebrates, as can be seen in the first New York museum show for the sixty-year-old German artist, which features twenty-seven works from key phases of his career. Large oils, at times combined with silk-screened digital imagery, may initially look like unholy messes: blowsy abstraction jostling with derelict figuration. Even Oehlen's passionate fans will confess to having felt a fierce dislike on first seeing his work, which goes beyond offending good taste to obliterating it. His handling of paint, at times with his fingers, yaws between gesture and smear. Canvases in shrieking reds and greens alternate with ones in muddy hues or just grays. There are stabs of beauty in passages that reveal Oehlen to be, almost grudgingly, a fantastic colorist, as with tender pinks and yellows, which echo halcyon Willem de Kooning. There is as much philosophical heft to what Oehlen won't allow himself, in the ways of order and balance, as in the stuttering virtuosity of what he does. Through Sept. 13.

GALLERIES—UPTOWN

Joshua Citarella

Framed and unframed photographs, some half-hidden behind others, are joined by ceramic tiles and metal rods, sand swept into a corner, and

small piles of pulverized gold and ore. What unites all the elements in this ambitious young New Yorker's show is far from apparent, but there is a tightly controlled energy, sparked by two portraits of female nudes smeared in silver. Shifting between abstraction and representation, the elemental and the ephemeral, Citarella constructs a puzzle that seems impossible to solve but is nonetheless dazzling. Through June 27. (Higher Pictures, 980 Madison Ave., at 76th St. 212-249-6100.)

Françoise Grossen

Lately, the art world has been having a romance with fibre art, too long denigrated as mere craft or "women's work," as an important tendency in postwar sculpture. (A major exhibition took place last year at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston.) Grossen, a Swiss-born New Yorker receiving her first American survey here, braids and ties lengths of sisal and Manila hemp into dense, pliable-looking forms that she frequently suspends from the ceiling. Her astonishing "Five Rivers," from 1974, integrates draped ropes into a circuit of color and bulk. Later sculptures, swinging like air-dried hams, incorporate not only dyed and painted Manila but also dark plaster, sheathing the fibre in a restrictive embrace. Through Aug. 14. (Blum & Poe, 19 E. 66th St. 212-249-2249.)

GALLERIES—CHELSEA

Gillian Laub

Any story about race relations in the American South is bound to be complicated, but the one Laub tackled while documenting segregated proms in a small Georgia town was especially thorny. The photojournalist's big color pictures of glammed-up high schoolers (including several interracial couples) are accompanied by wall texts, in which the students explain the history of separate homecoming celebrations and the proms that followed. When they were finally integrated, in 2010, Laub returned to take the other pictures here. In 2011, Norman Neesmith, who is white, shot and killed Justin Patterson, a black teen-ager who was visiting the mixed-race girl Neesmith had raised from infancy. Charged with murder, he was convicted of manslaughter and sentenced to one year in jail. A brief video about that crime, excerpted from Laub's HBO documentary, "Southern Rites," helps explain the tension that seethes beneath the otherwise placid surface of her pictures. Through June 27. (Benrubi, 521 W. 26th St. 212-888-6007.)

Igaël Shemtov

In 1979 and 1980, inspired by the color snapshots he had processed in a Kodak lab, the Israeli photographer produced the conceptually

sophisticated but unpretentious landscapes, portraits, and interiors here. Pictures of a donkey eating tomatoes, an amusement park, a seaside kiosk, and a couple in bathing suits sprawled on a lawn have the casual, buoyant quality of a tourist's snapshots. But their concision and consistency are hardly artless (Stephen Shore and Luigi Ghirri both come to mind). Shemtov's genuine appreciation for the ordinary allows his work to transcend its period and join the ranks of the timeless. Through June 27. (Meislin, 534 W. 24th St. 212-627-2552.)

GALLERIES—DOWNTOWN

"Summer Reading"

Organized by the influential British artist Richard Wentworth, this gratifyingly terse summer show opens with two photographs by Brassai, originally published in the nineteen-thirties Surrealist magazine *Minotaure*: a pushpin and a morsel of soap, transformed by the camera's closeup into talismanic abstractions. Themes of the uncanny ordinary and improvisation recur in Francis Alÿs's slide show of chewed gum stuck underneath tables, Fernanda Gomes's fragile balsa-wood assemblages, and Wentworth's own photographs of a cinder-block doorstop and a half-dismantled cardboard box on the street. The Minotaur recurs, too, in the form of a taxidermied steer's head on the wall, by Jimmie Durham, an expat American artist and activist of Cherokee descent. Through July 24. (Freeman, 140 Grand St. 212-966-5154.)

"Tom of Finland: The Pleasure of Play"

For years, the artist Tom of Finland, who died in 1991, has been something of an open dirty secret. Born in Helsinki, in 1920, he was the son of schoolteachers. Trained as a classical pianist, he worked as a graphic designer to get by. In the fifties, he was selling his unique black-and-white sketches of well-endowed muscle men enacting fantasies—biker-camp sex shenanigans, criminals having their way with submissive cops—for the Los Angeles-based magazine *Physique Pictorial*. He has since been applauded by artists as diverse as Robert Mapplethorpe (who helped get Tom his first major show in New York, in 1980) and John Waters. This is the most comprehensive survey of his drawings to date, but a little of Tom goes a long way: his obsession with power, youth, and beauty may not be yours. Still, it's interesting and a lot of fun to hang out with the pornographer, who did have a talent for drawing and narrative and—who knew?—also made paper dolls and was a skilled collagist. Through Aug. 23. (Artists Space, 38 Greene St. and 55 Walker St. 212-226-3970.)

CLASSICAL MUSIC

CONCERTS IN TOWN

Naumburg Orchestral Concerts

These concerts may have minimal assistance from the city (the Beaux-Arts Naumburg Bandshell endures in a state of scruffy elegance), but thousands show up each year for free and festively delivered musical entertainment in Central Park. The Knights, the Brooklyn chamber orchestra that's famous way beyond its borough, begins this year's lineup with an adventurous concert of music by Schubert, Arvo Pärt ("Tabula Rasa"), Ligeti (the zesty "Concert Românesc"), and Zhou Long; then Simone Dinnerstein joins Poisson Rouge's Ensemble LPR in a program featuring John Adams's exhilarating "Shaker Loops," Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 23 in A Major, and Schoenberg's "Transfigured Night." (Mid-Park, south of 72nd St. June 23 and June 30 at 7:30. No tickets required.)

Metropolitan Opera Summer Recital Series

A new trio of young singers joins the series for the final leg of its tour through the city's parks. The soprano Kiri Deonarine, the mezzo-soprano Ginger Costa-Jackson, and the baritone John Moore serenade New Yorkers in all the boroughs but Brooklyn with arias and duets from "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," "Don Giovanni," and "Samson et Dalila," accompanied by the pianist Dan Saunders. (Socrates Sculpture Park, Queens, June 24 at 7. Jackie Robinson Park, Manhattan, June 26 at 7. Crotona Park, Bronx, June 28 at 7. Clove Lakes Park, Staten Island, June 30 at 7. metopera.org. No tickets required.)

New York City Electroacoustic Music Festival

Enthusiasts of electronic music will have plenty to explore as the sixth annual festival lights up the Abrons Arts Center. For an entire week, the music of more than two hundred international composers played by an equally international cast of performers will be heard, with special emphasis on composers utilizing not just digital sound but also visual media. Among the vast and varied work presented: João Pedro Oliveira's "Magma," Eric Chasalow's "Scuffle and Snap," Katharine Norman's "Making Place,"

and Kristin Vollness's "River Rising." The hundreds of performers taking part include Gianni Trovalusci, Mari Kimura, Miriam Ingolfsson, and Esther Lamneck. (466 Grand St., www.nycemf.org. Through June 28. Tickets at the door.)

String Orchestra of Brooklyn

Founded in 2007 by the violinist and conductor Eli Spindel, this ensemble has earned a place in the borough's teeming musical landscape for its astute combination of traditional and cutting-edge programming. Its upcoming concert at Roulette pairs a commissioned piano concerto by Scott Wollschleger (with Karl Larson) alongside pieces from the recent past by Morton Feldman and Krzysztof Penderecki. They will be joined by the Ghostlight Chorus and, for the first time, Iktus Percussion. (509 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn. roulette.org. June 25 at 8.)

Bargemusic

The pianist Ursula Oppens, for decades a distinctive presence in American contemporary music, comes to the floating chamber-music series to perform music written for her by the masters Frederic Rzewski ("Mayn Yingele") and John Corigliano ("Winging It, No. 3"), in addition to Corigliano's "Fantasia on an Ostinato," Schubert's Four Impromptus, Op. 90, and sonatas by Beethoven and Scriabin. (Fulton Ferry Landing, Brooklyn. June 26 at 8. For tickets and full schedule, see bargemusic.org.)

Harry Lawrence Freeman's "Voodoo"

Dubbed "the colored Wagner" by contemporary critics, the pioneering African-American composer, librettist, and producer (1869-1954) is little known today, owing to the dearth of published scores and recordings of his nearly two dozen operas. Morningside Opera, Harlem Opera Theatre, and Harlem Chamber Players have banded together to fill in the historical record, offering two fully orchestrated concerts of Freeman's grand opera, based on the manuscript score. Concerning a love triangle among three former slaves in postbellum Louisiana, the work incorporates jazz, blues, cakewalks, and spirituals, including a setting of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." (Miller Theatre, Columbia University, Broadway at 116th Street. 800-838-3006. June 26 and June 27 at 7.)

Five Boroughs Music Festival: Ekmeles

The peripatetic festival closes its season with an appearance by the virtuoso ensemble of vocal soloists, who will join with wind and brass players from TILT Brass and Loadbang to perform U.S. premières by two veteran German composers, Mathias Spahlinger and Wolfgang Rihm ("Skoteinós") as well as a



The renowned percussion ensemble Nexus launches the hundredth season of Maverick Concerts with a new work by Peter Schickele.

world première by the young New York composer Christopher Fisher-Lochhead ("Prosodia Daseia"). (DiMenna Center, 450 W. 37th St. 5bmf.org. June 29 at 7:30.)

Washington Square Music Festival

For more than six decades, this al-fresco chamber series has brought works both old and new to a storied section of lower Manhattan. Its next program, steeped in German Romanticism, offers two Septets for Winds and Strings: Bruch's obscure one (from 1849) and Beethoven's ever-popular standby, with a song for mezzo-soprano (Laila Salins) and strings by one of their successors, Alexander Zemlinsky, in between. (Washington Square Park, south of Fifth Avenue. June 30 at 8. No tickets required; seating is on a first-come, first-served basis.)

OUT OF TOWN

Caramoor

It was the love between Walter and Lucie Rosen (and the loss of their son in the Second World War) which impelled them to make their Westchester estate into a music festival, and chamber music, the most intimate form of sonic communication, has always thrived there. In addition to a concert by Edward Arron and Friends, the week also offers a concert by the up-and-coming Jasper String Quartet, which will perform the world première of the String Quartet No. 3 by Aaron Jay Kernis (whose Quartet No. 2 won the Pulitzer Prize in 1998), in addition to quartets by Beethoven and Debussy. (Katonah, N.Y. caramoor.org. June 26 at 8 and June 28 at 4:30.)

Music Mountain

The longtime festival's programming has been given a welcome jolt with the arrival of a new director, the pianist and conductor Jonathan Yates. On Friday, the venerable violist Kim Kashkashian performs an unaccompanied recital of music by Bach and Kurtág; on Saturday, the singers and instrumentalists of the group Cantata Profana, recently founded at Yale, perform works by Stravinsky (including "The Soldier's Tale"); and on Sunday the eminent Juilliard String Quartet performs quartets by Haydn, Webern, and Schubert (No. 14, "Death and the Maiden"). (Falls Village, Conn. 860-824-7126. June 26 at 7:30, June 27 at 6:30, and June 28 at 3.)

Maverick Concerts

These days, percussion quartets seem to grow on trees, but the movement began with Nexus, which started giving concerts in 1971. The four trailblazers open the hundredth season of Maverick Concerts—which, over the decades, has blazed many trails of its own—with a Saturday-night concert that features the world première of the Percussion Sonata No. 3 by a Woodstock legend, the composer and radio personality Peter Schickele, as well as a group of Persian songs arranged by Sepideh Raissadat. On Sunday afternoon, the acclaimed Shanghai Quartet, with the pianist Ran Dank, re-creates the first program ever heard in the Maverick Hall, from the summer of 1916: Haydn's String Quartet in G Major, Op. 77, No. 1; Bruch's "Kol Nidrei"; and Schumann's Piano Quintet. (Woodstock, N.Y. maverickconcerts.org. June 27 at 8 and June 28 at 4.)

NIGHT LIFE



POP UP

Spraynard carries on the sophomore yet imperishable pop-punk tradition.

THE SINGING STARTS BEFORE the band does, and so there is no avoiding the opening couplet, delivered in a plaintive voice by a man who evidently hasn't forgotten what it's like to be a boy: "I am every person that you've ever ignored / I am the flaming bag of dog shit on your porch." It is a kind of mission statement, and also an efficient sorting device. Those charmed by this collision of the earnest and the asinine will surely enjoy "Mable," the ebullient new album by a West Chester, Pennsylvania, pop-punk band called Spraynard, which is due out on July 10. And those uncharmed may nevertheless feel a grudging admiration for the unlikely longevity of pop punk itself, a seemingly silly genre that still works as well as it ever did, more than twenty years after "Dookie," the Green Day album, pushed it into the mainstream.

Pat Graham is the guitarist and singer of Spraynard, and his musical life was shaped by a hip older sister, who took him to see Green Day when he was ten. Graham soon graduated to more obscure bands, but never lost his faith in the power of fast tempos and bright melodies, and when he was nineteen he formed Spraynard with two childhood

friends. The band released a pair of slapdash but memorable (and modestly popular) albums and then, three years ago, suddenly broke up, because Graham was increasingly stressed out by the prospect of turning his larkish band into a serious concern. Spraynard reunited last year, and gradually Graham decided to rededicate himself to the band full-bore, although not quite full-time—both he and Pat Ware, the drummer, have the same suitably flexible jobs they have had since high school, at a batting-cage complex owned by Graham's brother.

Like many of the most important pop-punk bands, Spraynard has figured out that the genre's juvenile reputation doesn't preclude thoughtfulness. In fact, the continued vitality of pop punk owes a lot to deft songwriters like Graham, who understand that energetic songs need not be cheerful. (In this respect, the genre's true trailblazer is not Green Day but Blink-182, who chronicled depression and diarrhea with equal gusto.) "Mable" is full of songs about strained relationships, not all of them necessarily romantic—it is possible that Graham's most traumatic breakup, and reconciliation, was with his band. And even at his most impassioned he can sound decidedly reasonable, yelping, "Some nights you will need to sleep alone, and that's alright / Is it alright if that's not tonight?" The band plays Amityville Music Hall, on Long Island, on June 27, and then Shea Stadium, the do-it-yourself space in Brooklyn, on July 16, by which time the kids (including the grownup kids) in the crowd will have no excuse not to know all the lyrics to the new songs, and sing along.

—*Kelefa Sanneh*

ROCK AND POP

Musicians and night-club proprietors lead complicated lives; it's advisable to check in advance to confirm engagements.

"Contemporary Color"

The Brooklyn Academy of Music has teamed up with the Barclays Center to give the former Talking Heads front man **David Byrne** a grand stage to share his newest passion: color guard. The popular high-school sport, which has roots in the military, marshals spirit with flags, batons, sabres, gymnastics, and sequins. Prerecorded music is the norm, but Byrne, who wanted to try something new, has instigated collaborations between award-winning teen-age color-guard squads and a few of his favorite musicians, including **Nelly Furtado**, **Devonté Hynes** (**Blood Orange**), **St. Vincent**, and **tUnE-yArDs**. (Barclays Center, 620 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn. bam.org. June 27-28.)

Rhett Miller

The front man and principal songwriter for the Old 97s, the terrifically tuneful, sometimes raucous Texas band that delivers high-octane alt-country, is also a solo artist who takes deep dives into the trickier reaches of the psyche on his own albums. His latest release, "The Traveler," came out last month and was recorded with the help of Portland's Black Prairie, a spinoff of the Decembrists that's fluent in everything from bluegrass to klezmer. It considers the promises and pitfalls of human relationships, both lasting and fleeting. (City Winery, 155 Varick St. 212-608-0555. June 24.)

Jessica Pratt

When this towheaded chanteuse warbles on her song "Game That I Play" that "people's faces blend

together like a watercolor you can't remember," she may as well be talking about folksingers in general—these days, it's not easy to stand out from the throngs of guitar-gripping dreamers found on coffee-shop stages each night. "Game" is off her latest record, "On Your Own Love Again," and it shows how Pratt rises above the fray by dialling back. Her songs take the form of spare freak-folk downers, done in the devastating style of Nick Drake and sung in a jejune soprano that recalls her Drag City Records label mate Joanna Newsom, or even, at times, the witchy fringes of Stevie Nicks's solo career. (Le Poisson Rouge, 158 Bleecker St. 212-505-3474. June 26.)

Summerstage

The thirtieth-anniversary season of this concert series continues on June 24 with the **Kooks**, whose debut album of gritty, shambolic rock and roll, "Inside In/Inside Out," made them massive stars at home in the U.K. almost a decade ago. Two years later, they turned up their take on the British Invasion sounds of the sixties with "Konk," an album that took its name from Ray Davies's studio. Since then, they've broadened their approach with orchestral touches, gospel choruses, and dance beats, all of which can be found on their latest release, "Listen." June 27: The esteemed reggae label VP Records marks its thirty-fifth birthday with a party headlined by **Maxi Priest**. June 29: The local girl made good **Ingrid Michaelson** charms listeners with her clever wordplay and crystalline voice. (Rumsey Playfield, Central Park, mid-Park at 69th St. summerstage.org.)

Richard Thompson

The sixty-six-year-old British songwriter and guitar master continues his remarkable career with "Still," a new album of affecting Celtic-tinged

ballads, fifties-style rockers, and several songs that fall between genres. Thompson's career began in the late sixties with the British folk group Fairport Convention. In the following decade, he teamed up with his then wife, Linda, a powerful and haunting singer, and together they released a handful of albums, including two masterpieces, "I Want to See the Bright Lights Tonight," from 1974, and "Pour Down Like Silver," from the following year. His latest release was produced by Wilco's leader, Jeff Tweedy, who took a minimally active approach over all, allowing Thompson's finely wrought tunes to soar on their own. (Town Hall, 123 W. 43rd St. ticketmaster.com. June 26.)

JAZZ AND STANDARDS

Blue Note Jazz Festival

The annual gathering winds down this week, and a few highlights follow. **Robert Glasper** is at the Blue Note (131 W. 3rd St. 212-475-8592) June 24-27. The formidable pianist recorded his new album, "Covered," live in front of an audience at the legendary Capitol Studios, in Los Angeles, and by returning to his early trio mates—the bassist **Vicente Archer** and the drummer **Damion Reid**—Glasper dispensed with the vocalists found on his "Black Radio" recordings. The trio reimagines diverse material by the likes of Radiohead, Joni Mitchell, and Kendrick Lamar, keeping the focus on the leader's impressively fluid technique while finding its own intuitive groove. June 29-30: The Israeli bassist, composer, and singer **Avishai Cohen** brings his "From Darkness" trio to the Highline Ballroom (431 W. 16th St.). Also on those last two nights of the festival (as well as on July 1), the vocalist **Bebel Gilberto** holds court at the Blue Note. (bluenotejazzfestival.com.)

Bertha Hope Quintet Tribute to Elmo Hope

Despite the exceptional recorded examples of his idiosyncratic piano playing (as on Harold Land's 1961 album, "The Fox," or on Hope's own "Homecoming!," from the same year) and striking compositions, the name Elmo Hope—a mainstay of the fifties jazz scene, who died in 1967—is fast being lost to the ages. His wife, Bertha, a fine pianist herself, who joined Elmo on the 1961 release "Hope-Full," brings his work to life at Minton's. (206 W. 118th St. 212-243-2222. June 28.)

Mostly Other People Do the Killing

With "Blue," the confrontational note-for-note reproduction of "Kind of Blue," presumably now out of their system, the bassist **Moppa Elliott**, the saxophonist **Jon Irabagon**, the trumpeter **Peter Evans**, and the drummer **Kevin Shea** must be rooting around for new musical provocations. At the ShapeShifter Lab, a loftlike space in Gowanus, Brooklyn, this week they expand their group to a septet, with guests that include the trumpeter **Steven Bernstein**. **Bryan and the Aardvarks**, whose album, "Heroes of Make Believe," revels in melody and mood, warm up the crowd. (18 Whitwell Pl., Brooklyn. shapeshifterlab.com. June 23.)

Django Reinhardt NY Festival

Guest musicians join a Gypsy jazz ensemble led by the fleet-fingered guitarist **Samson Schmitt**, son of the noted French guitarist and violinist Dorado Schmitt, each night. This year the clarinetist **Ken Peplowski**, the trombonist **Chris Washburne**, the Colombian harpist **Edmar Castaneda**, and the French washboard virtuoso **Stéphane Séva** are among the eclectic participants. (Birdland, 315 W. 44th St. 212-581-3080. June 23-27.)



NOW PLAYING

Dope

A minor film on a major subject. The writer and director Rick Famuyiwa sets the story of Malcolm Adekanbi (Shameik Moore), a high-school senior, in a predominantly black neighborhood in his home town of Inglewood, California. There, Malcolm—whose father is a Nigerian man he's never met and whose mother is a

bus driver—is something of a cultural oddball. A scholarly fan of nineties hip-hop, Malcolm has a punk-rock band with his two best friends, Jib (Tony Revolori) and Diggy (Kiersey Clemons). He's a free-spirited, hardworking student who dreams of going to Harvard and a classic nerd who's the inevitable victim of bullies. Caught between Bloods on one street and drug dealers on

another, Malcolm does a favor for a local kingpin named Dom (A\$AP Rocky) and meets—and quickly falls for—Nakia (Zoë Kravitz), a smart girl who unintentionally lures him into Dom's orbit. Malcolm inadvertently ends up with a gun and a backpack full of drugs, and the only way out of his predicament is to sell the stash. Though there are outbursts of deadly violence and a constant risk of arrest, Famuyiwa keeps the tone light. He rushes through Malcolm's learning curve in criminal enterprise and sketches the heart of the film in comic asides that suggest his stifled flair for satire.—*Richard Brody* (In limited release.)

Eden

Mia Hansen-Løve's new film follows Paul (Félix de Givry), the Dorian Gray

of the French electronic-music scene. His story begins in 1992 and lasts more than twenty years, during which he barely seems to age: a remarkable feat, given that his principal foodstuff is cocaine. Paul is a d.j., specializing in what he calls "New York garage with a Parisian twist." He and his friend Stan (Hugo Conzelmann) form a duo, taking the name Cheers, which they regard as uplifting, but which, to viewers here, may suggest guys called Norm and Cliff sitting heavily at a bar. There is almost no plot; our hero drifts through Paris, falls in love and tumbles into debt, and takes a lengthy detour to America, during which, in an excruciating sequence, he revisits an old flame (Greta Gerwig). Even in the busiest clubs, in the small hours, Hansen-Løve keeps her distance, serenely surveying the

OPENING

ESCORBAR: PARADISE LOST
Reviewed this week in The Current Cinema. Opening June 26. (In limited release.)

MAX

A drama, about a dog who's traumatized by his work with the Army. Directed by Boaz Yakin; starring Robbie Amell and Lauren Graham. Opening June 26. (In wide release.)

THE PRINCESS OF FRANCE

Reviewed in Now Playing. Opening June 26. (In limited release.)

TED 2

A comedy sequel, about a trash-talking Teddy bear (voiced by Seth MacFarlane, who directed) and his human friend (Mark Wahlberg). Opening June 26. (In wide release.)

REVIVALS AND FESTIVALS

Titles in bold are reviewed.

ANTHOLOGY FILM ARCHIVES

Films by Sergei Eisenstein. June 27 at 4:30: "October" (1928). • June 27 at 7:30: "Old and New" (1929).

BAM CINÉMATEK

"BAMcinemaFest." June 24 at 9:45: Short films, including "Swimming in Your Skin Again" (2015, Terence Nance). • June 26 at 9:30: "The Invitation" (2015, Karyn Kusama).

FILM FORUM

In revival. June 26-July 9 (call for showtimes): "The Third Man" (1949, Carol Reed).

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

"The Scent of Places." June 25 at 7: "The Lost Film" (2003, Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige). • June 27 at 4: "The Zanj Revolution" (2013, Tariq Teguia). • "Glorious Technicolor." June 26 at 7 and June 28 at 6:30: "The Gang's All Here." • June 27 at 7:15 and June 30 at 4:30: "Apache Drums" (1951, Hugo Fregonese).

MUSEUM OF THE MOVING IMAGE

Special screening. June 26 at 7: "House Party" (1990, Reginald Hudlin).



MOVIE OF THE WEEK

A video discussion of Kenji Mizoguchi's "Utamaro and His Five Women," from 1947, in our digital edition and online.

Dionysian throng. If the result feels anesthetized, that could be seen as a tribute to the music, which remains ecstatically dull; when you are lost in it, the movie implies, the rest of life—and even time itself—can pass you by. In French.—*Anthony Lane* (In limited release.)

The Gang's All Here

The gaudy palette of Busby Berkeley's vertiginous Technicolor musical, from 1943, inspired the director's most extravagant visual inventions, starting with a musical number done in long, swooping takes running from a dark soundstage to a shipyard that turns out to be the colossal set of a Manhattan night club where Carmen Miranda and her tutti-frutti hat hold sway. The story is a wartime romance: Sergeant Andy Mason, Jr. (James Ellison), who's about to ship out for combat duty, pursues a plebeian showgirl, Eadie Allen (Alice Faye), despite his engagement to Vivian Potter (Sheila Ryan), the daughter of his father's business partner (Edward Everett Horton). An outdoor bash to sell war bonds offers eye-catching dances, but Berkeley's virtuosity is more than ornamental. He is, in effect, a sociobiologist, whose production numbers connect social behavior to instinctual drives—sometimes gloriously blatantly, as in a famous scene with giant bananas. In the finale, the characters kaleidoscopically dissolve into an erotic whirl of color, presenting personality as merely the human face of inhuman forces. The blend of patriotic sentiment and ecstatic frenzy suggests that the freedom for which Sergeant Mason and his cohorts fight is, above all, sexual.—*R.B.* (MOMA; June 26 and June 28.)

Jurassic World

The breeding of fresh dinosaurs began with "Jurassic Park," and to judge by this fourth attempt we are not done yet. The island setting is the same, but, in order to sate the public's appetite, the park is now crammed with new breeds. One of them is Indominus rex, a super-sized variant of Tyrannosaurus, who flees her ostensibly impregnable compound and starts to refine her biting skills on humans, herbivores, and other easy meat. Ranged against her are Claire Dearing (Bryce Dallas Howard), an uptight executive who gradually simplifies her clothing, like Maureen O'Sullivan in the Tarzan movies, to prove that she is jungle-tough; Owen Grady (Chris Pratt), a former Navy man who now trains raptors as if they were fine-boned yearlings; and Hoskins (Vincent D'Onofrio), whose plan is to redeploy dinosaurs as military weapons, and whose nasty smile suggests that, just possibly, he may not survive the film. We also get a couple of kids (Nick Robinson and Ty Simpkins) who are stranded in harm's way; their perilous state, like so much in the

story, is borrowed without shame from Steven Spielberg's initial movie. One minor character even takes the trouble to remark, in awe, that another is wearing a Jurassic Park T-shirt. The director of this touching and noisy homage is Colin Trevorrow.—*A.L.* (Reviewed in our issue of 6/22/15.) (In wide release.)

Love & Mercy

Bill Pohlad's film is about the rise and fall of Brian Wilson, although it gently suggests that, from the start, Wilson's life had been marked by risings and fallings of every kind. Paul Dano plays Wilson as a young man—already flush with surfer hits and heading toward the deeper and more troubled waters of "Pet Sounds" and "Good Vibrations." Dano, plump of face and frame, dives into the role—his best and most gratifying to date—as if it were a plunge pool. The older Wilson is played by John Cusack, whose looks may be wrong for the part but who catches the hesitant moves of a wounded creature—preyed upon by Eugene Landy (Paul Giamatti), a dangerous quack with tubs of pharmaceuticals, but rescued by Melinda Ledbetter (Elizabeth Banks), the sanest and strongest figure in the story. Scholars of the Beach Boys will, no doubt, find much to quarrel with here, yet the film is wholeheartedly invested in the plight of the characters—and, what's rarer still, in the joyous mechanics of the songs. When did you last see a musical bio-pic that seemed happiest—and most patiently rapt with detail—in the recording studio?—*A.L.* (6/8 & 15/15) (In limited release.)

The Overnight

The outsized exertions of a terrific cast can't bring this callow sex comedy, written and directed by Patrick Brice, to life. Adam Scott and Taylor Schilling play Alex and Emily, square and middle-class country mice newly transplanted to Los Angeles; they have dinner at the lavish home of the hip, rich, and swinging city mice Kurt and Charlotte (Jason Schwartzman and Judith Godrèche) after the couples' young sons bond at a local playground. After the meal, the two boys go to sleep, Kurt brings out the bong, and the carefree bull session morphs into an erotically charged adventure. In the evening's skinny-dip phase, Alex, self-conscious about his unusually small penis, is all the more panicked by Kurt's exceptionally large one—but, with Kurt's help, Alex transforms the occasion into an improvised therapy session, putting his marriage at risk. Meanwhile, Charlotte tries to lure Emily into a walk on the wild side. The writing is blatantly sexual but utterly unrevealing; the characters and their problems are cut to fit the airtight plot. As the flamboyant Kurt, Schwartzman kicks his lines gleefully aloft with the back of his

heel and catches them spinning on his fingertips; these deft antics are the film's only substance.—*R.B.* (In limited release.)

The Princess of France

The Argentinean director Matías Piñeiro invests a cream-puff conceit—the intertwined romantic and artistic adventures of a young Buenos Aires theatre troupe—with an ingenious and intricate armature. From the opening shot, a five-minute take that turns a nighttime soccer game into a tour de force of analog magic, Piñeiro reveals the emotional overload of performers offstage. The company's leader, Victor (Julián Larquier Tellarini), returns early from a planned year in Mexico City and finds everything changed, in love and art. His girlfriend is involved with another member of the company, his new lover is keeping her distance, and friends and lovers covet each other's roles in his radio production of "Love's Labour's Lost" while falling prey to misapprehensions mirroring those of the play. Piñeiro builds elaborate sequences of rapid-fire verbal jousting over psychological and emotional subtleties, and he films them as he films his Shakespearean scenes: with roving, probing images that emphasize the highly charged spaces that both separate and bind people onstage and in love alike. Packing three hours of complications into a sixty-five-minute featurette, Piñeiro lends intimate conflicts in claustrophobic settings a vast scope. In Spanish.—*R.B.* (In limited release.)

San Andreas

Dwayne Johnson may have shed his former sobriquet, the Rock, but it comes back to haunt him in this new movie, which requires him, in essence, to brace himself against a vast geological collapse. Johnson plays a helicopter rescue pilot named Ray, who, disregarding the needs of the general populace, attends purely to the safety of his immediate family. First, he plucks his wife, Emma (Carla Gugino), from a roof in Los Angeles, and then moves on to San Francisco, where their daughter, Blake (Alexandra Daddario), is trapped in a doomed and flooded building—by a nice coincidence, the handiwork of the very schmuck (Ioan Gruffudd) who has stolen Emma's heart. Johnson remains as indestructible as ever, which is good news for California, but his equable demeanor is sorely tested by the solemnity of the proceedings. The director is Brad Peyton, and one downside of the thumping special effects is that the script, by Carlton Cuse, appears to have suffered structural damage along the way. There is also a Cassandra-flavored role for Paul Giamatti, as a scientist who warned us of this calamity (the earthquake, not the film) but went unheeded. Will we ever learn?—*A.L.* (6/8 & 15/15) (In wide release.)

Spy

Melissa McCarthy shines in this clever action-comedy showcase provided by the writer and director Paul Feig, but the movie's tightly contrived plot and uniformly positive emotions constrain her comic genius. She plays Susan Cooper, a C.I.A. agent with great combat skills whose low self-esteem relegates her to a desk job as the video eyes of the suave and daring field agent Bradley Fine (Jude Law), on whom she has an unrequited crush. When he's killed in an effort to thwart the sale of a stolen nuclear device, Susan volunteers for action to take his place. She pursues a diabolical criminal (Rose Byrne) to Paris, Rome, and Budapest, and Feig delights in the picturesque settings, but McCarthy's performance, fitting the character, remains frumpily empathetic, until late in the film. Susan's emergency improvisation to get out of a jam lets McCarthy lunge into the potty-mouthed persona of a paramilitary ass-kicker. Her spew of invective and uninhibited aggression is recklessly hilarious but all too brief. —*R.B.* (In wide release.)

The Tribe

A demanding film from Myroslav Slaboshpytskiy, set in and around a Ukrainian boarding school. The actors, and the characters that they play, are deaf, yet nobody seems lost for words; on the contrary, people's sign language is all too expressive, and, despite the absence of subtitles, the ferocity of feeling on display outstrips that of many talking pictures. We follow the battered fortunes of a new boy, Sergey (Grygoriy Fesenko), who is swiftly enrolled into a school gang. Its predations are either ignored or abetted by the staff; boozing and robbery are rife, and two female pupils work as prostitutes. The grim routine is interrupted when one of them, Anya (Yana Novikova), warms to Sergey, and this short flicker of tenderness in a prison-dark world is enough to send him into a possessive rage. Political readings of the tale, though tempting, are hard to prove, and there is something implacable and armored about the movie, which proceeds along the path of intense violence as if there were no other way. The command of images is equally determined; the camera stays with every scene, unblinking and often unmoving, until it is done. —*A.L.* (6/22/15) (In limited release.)

The Wolfpack

A documentary, directed by Crystal Moselle, about the Angulo clan: two parents, one sister, and—at center stage—six brothers. The boys closely resemble one another, and their lives, in an apartment on the Lower East Side, could not be more tightly interknit. Homeschooling is the least of it. Seldom do the kids leave the place (once, they didn't go out for a year), and their principal conduit to the outside world is through films—watching them; typing out the scripts; learning the lines; fashioning costumes and props, including cardboard guns; and restaging sequences from favorite flicks. “Reservoir Dogs,” complete with black suits and ties and white shirts, goes down especially well. If there is a ghost at the feast, it is the father, a Peruvian immigrant who is often glimpsed in old video clips but is seen infrequently in Moselle's own footage, and whose abusive habits and lofty beliefs are mentioned with quiet trepidation. Any shock comes not from the freakiness of the domestic setup but from seeing how thoughtful and decent, by and large, the boys have turned out—far more so than the menacing electronic score would like us to think. Their virtual imprisonment has shaped but not ruined them, and we slowly see them venture into the wilds of regular existence. Should anyone be looking for half a dozen film critics, these guys would fit right in. —*A.L.* (In limited release.)

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INSIDER NEWS



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DANCE

American Ballet Theatre

Where would ballet be without "Swan Lake"? At the matinée on June 24, Misty Copeland, the company's first African-American dancer to perform the dual role of Odette and Odile, will make her New York debut, with the always reliable James Whiteside. (Copeland, who was recently featured on the cover of *Time*, danced her first "Swan" last year, in Australia.) The following week, the company presents Frederick Ashton's delightful "Cinderella," a work full of hilariously broad mime passages—Cinders's ugly sisters are men in drag—and complex, witty choreography. • June 23 and June 25-26 at 7:30, June 24 at 2 and 7:30, and June 27 at 2 and 8: "Swan Lake." • June 29-30: "Cinderella." (Metropolitan Opera House, Lincoln Center. 212-362-6000. Through July 4.)

The Royal Ballet

After an eleven-year absence, the British troupe returns for a week-long run at the Koch Theatre, with works by Frederick Ashton, Kenneth MacMillan, Liam Scarlett, and Wayne McGregor. (Lincoln Center. 212-496-0600. June 23-28.)

"Surviving Twin"

"The past is never dead. It's not even past," goes the famous William Faulkner quote, and the singer-songwriter Loudon Wainwright III has personalized that notion throughout his career. "Although my father's dead and gone, I'm his surviving twin," he sings on the song that gives this one-man show its title. Wainwright's father was a columnist for *Life* magazine, and the singer ruminates on his articles, reading some aloud, in a performance directed by Daniel Stern. (SubCulture, 45 Bleecker St. 212-533-5470. Wednesday at 7:30, through June 24.)

"Sleepless Nights"

Daniel Felsenfeld has provided the

DanceBrazil

Among the unintended consequences of the Atlantic slave trade to Brazil was the development in Brazil of the martial art capoeira—the core technique and tradition of this nearly forty-year-old dance troupe. "Malungos," a première by the artistic director, Jelon Vieira, illustrates communal solidarity among the slaves and their descendants. Two works from last year—"Gueto," about ghetto life, and "Búzios," about divination—fill out the program. (Joyce Theatre, 175 Eighth Ave., at 19th St. 212-242-0800. June 23-30. Through July 3.)

"River to River"

The Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's series of free outdoor events continues. At Peck Slip, Michelle Boulé reprises "White," a stylish, wispy trio about impalpable things. At South Street Seaport, Wally Cardona and Jennifer Lacey present the sixth installment of "The Set Up," a series of encounters with masters of traditional dance, in this case the seventy-year-old Burmese teacher Saya Lei. On Governors Island, Rachel Tess responds to the architecture of Fort Jay in "Souvenir Undone," and Emmanuelle Huynh stages a ritual circle dance in "Cribles/Wild Governors." Visit lmcc.net for complete schedule. (212-219-9401. June 24-28.)

Christopher Williams

Lately, the choreographer, dancer, and puppeteer has been choreographing operas in Europe for directors including Peter Sellars and Michel Fau. In this program, entitled "Spirits of the Air and Heroes," Williams once again dips into the fertile pool of myth and legend, including the

stories of Janet (a heroine of Scottish myth) and Jason (of the Golden Fleece). Douglas Dunn will also present a short work. (92nd Street Y, Lexington Ave. at 92nd St. 212-415-5500. June 26-28.)

"Contemporary Color"

Color guard—the synchronized spinning and tossing of flags, rifles, and sabres, most widely seen in the halftime shows of high-school and collegiate football—gets a makeover, presented by BAM and Barclays Center. David Byrne, perennially hip and always interested in vernacular arts, has invited an eclectic lineup of musician friends (including St. Vincent, Nico Muhly, and tUnE-yArDs) to provide new music for championship color-guard routines and play it live. The elaborate routines, mortared with contemporary dance, are tightly packed with breathtaking feats and kitsch. The cultural collision makes this arena spectacle one of a kind. (Barclays Center, 620 Atlantic Ave., Brooklyn. 800-745-3000. June 27-28.)

OUT OF TOWN

Jacob's Pillow

Ballet BC, a slickly contemporary troupe from Vancouver, brings work by two Spanish-born choreographers to the Ted Shawn. In "Twenty Eight Thousand Waves," Cayetano Soto buffets the stage with swells and breakers of tangled motion; Gustavo Ramirez Sansano offers a sex-driven take on "The Rite of Spring." William Forsythe's spare, spiky movement study "Workwithinwork" completes the program. • At the Doris Duke, New York Theatre Ballet presents its kid-friendly "Cinderella," a brisk and mildly charming abridgment

choreographed by Donald Mahler to excerpts from the great Prokofiev score. (Becket, Mass. 413-243-0745. June 24-28.)

Mark Morris Dance Group / Tanglewood

Morris returns to the summer music festival with "The," a new dance set to the piano-four-hands version of the First Brandenburg Concerto, by Bach. On the same program, Morris, who of late has taken up conducting, leads the Tanglewood Music Center Fellows in a rendition of the full orchestral version of the same concerto (sans dancing). To top things off, his company performs "Cargo," a 2005 work in which the dancers use poles as totems, weapons, monkey bars, and pogo sticks. The music is Darius Milhaud's "La Création du Monde." (297 West St., Lenox, Mass. 888-266-1200. June 25-26.)

Pam Tanowitz / Bard SummerScape

For the summer festival, whose focus this year is the music of the Mexican modernist Carlos Chávez, Tanowitz has created a new solo, en pointe, for Ashley Tuttle, a former American Ballet Theatre star, set to a Chávez sonatina for piano and violin. The evening also includes two recent works, "Broken Story (Wherein There Is No Ecstasy)" and "Heaven on One's Head." Keep an eye out for Melissa Toogood and Dylan Crossman, two former Cunningham dancers who bring a real élan to Tanowitz's tricky footwork. (Richard B. Fisher Center for the Performing Arts, Bard College, Annandale-on-Hudson, N.Y. 845-758-7900. June 27-28.)

ABOVE & BEYOND

music for this concert in the Center for Fiction's "Notes on Fiction" series, drawing on texts by Rick Moody (from his novel "The Diviners"), Elizabeth Hardwick (for the title piece), Robert Coover (the ribald "Raw Footage"), and other noted writers. The singers Ariadne Greif and Kacey Cardin are backed by the Nouveau Classical Project for this performance, and Coover and Moody will be on hand to read from their work. (17 E. 47th St. June 25 at 8. Tickets at the door.)

READINGS AND TALKS

Strand Book Store

Fred Goodman, a specialist in the pitfalls of the music business, talks

with the Sirius XM Radio host Meg Griffin about his latest book, "Allen Klein: The Man Who Bailed Out the Beatles, Made the Stones, and Transformed Rock & Roll." (Broadway at 12th St. 212-473-1452. June 24 at 7.)

Make It in Brooklyn Summit

Innovators and industry leaders from the fields of real estate (naturally), fine-food production (ditto), and the arts (of course) gather for a day of talks capped by a pitch contest, in which the winner stands to get fifty thousand dollars in funding. (Most events are at the Theatre for a New Audience's Polonsky Shakespeare Center, at 262 Ashland Pl.

makeitnbk.com. June 25, starting at 8 A.M.)

The Drama Book Shop

Carey Perloff, the artistic director of San Francisco's American Conservatory Theatre, started her career at the Classic Stage Company, in New York City, in 1987. On June 25 at 6, she returns to talk about her newly published memoir, "Beautiful Chaos: A Life in the Theater." (250 W. 40th St. 212-944-0595.)

McNally Jackson Books

The playwright and activist Larry Kramer discusses his latest novel, "The American People, Volume 1: Search for My Heart." (52 Prince St. 212-274-1160. June 30 at 7.)



TABLES FOR TWO

LUPULO

835 Sixth Ave., at 29th St. (212-290-7600)

THE OTHER NIGHT AT LUPULO, on an otherwise dreary block east of Penn Station, a man dug into an iridescent grilled sardine, ribboned in vinegary peppers. The air was sweet with smoke. “Oh, oh!” he said. “Oh! This is one of the best things I’ve ever eaten.” Another night, another man: “Oh, yeah!” he exhaled, closing his eyes as he savored an earthy mouthful of warm, bright fava beans tossed with craggy morels and rich crumbles of crimson-tinged blood sausage. *Lupulo* is the Portuguese word for hops, as in the flowers that are a key ingredient of beer, and the name is hardly arbitrary: there are a dozen beers on tap, and an enormous U-shaped bar takes up half of the capacious dining room. But to describe Lupulo as a beer bar, or the menu as “beer food,” would be misleading, not least because the beer here is as versatile as wine, carefully curated to be far-ranging, surprising, and unimpeachably interesting.

And while the food and the beer pair beautifully—the deceptively simple charred chicken with the sour, fizzy Rodenbach Grand Cru, for example—the existence of one doesn’t depend upon the other. The chef, George Mendes, born in the U.S. to Portuguese immigrants, earned a Michelin star with his first ode to the old country, *Aldea*. His razor-clam-and-cucumber salad—the former sliced into silky pendants, the latter in raw matchsticks, charred cubes, and pickled half-moons—needs nothing to enhance its briny symphony. Salt-cod croquettes are deep fried but betray no trace of grease, their exterior as delicate and resilient as an eggshell, cracking open to pillowy potato flecked with fish. The tart, spritzzy Bayerischer Bahnhof Berliner Style Weisse, which goes down as easy as lemonade, is great with anything.

For those who prefer their yeast in solid form, there’s an unusually bountiful bread basket, brimming with squishy sourdough, coarse cornmeal *broa*, and chorizo-flecked rolls. It comes with just a splash of olive oil, which might be a helpful signal from the kitchen to not eat it all at once; you’ll need it later. Giant, ruby-red prawns known as *carabineros*, flown in seasonally from Portugal, are grilled, head on, until they’re just cooked, their perfume nearly floral, their flavor lush and buttery. At thirteen dollars per shrimp, their juices must be sopped. *Caracóis*, meaty little knots of de-shelled snails, arrive in a pool of lusty *alinho*, a traditional sauce of garlic, paprika, and parsley which would be a shame to waste. With the rib eye, a marvel of meat, pliant and funky after sixty days of aging: purple potatoes, blistered on the grill. For dessert: a wedge of soft, grassy sheep’s-milk cheese with a pouf of pastry, a smear of quince paste, and a scoop of kaffir-lime sorbet. The gracious staff gives none of the “You should feel lucky to be here” guff so prevalent in restaurants of late. The irony is, you should.

—Hannah Goldfield

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PHOTOGRAPH BY WILLIAM MEBANE



FOOD & DRINK

BAR TAB THREES BREWING

333 Douglass St., Brooklyn (718-522-2110)

On a recent weeknight at Threes Brewing, a couple of paradigmatic Park Slope families with locally raised toddlers were stirring not shaking alongside twenty- and thirty-somethings. Most patrons had trickled outside to the spacious seashell-carpeted garden in search of light after the long winter. There was darkness for those who sought it, too—behind the bar were home-brewed beers called *I Hate Myself* and *Words Have No Meaning*. “It’s a pain to say a sentence when you just want to get a drink,” someone grumbled. Threes combats short attention spans by having different restaurants occupy its kitchen for brief residencies, which, alongside the ever-changing beer menu, keeps things novel. A chef from *Insa*, opening in Gowanus later this year, served up a flavorful Korean blood sausage and a soy-braised short rib that disappeared as quickly as the saison-style beer that accompanied it. If you can stomach something that’s not Brooklyn-fermented, the cocktails should be a priority. Appropriately, first on the list is the terrific *Negligence*, which blends gin, basil syrup, lemon, and absinthe into what looks like a green juice cleanse, but is much better for you, depending on who you trust. “Your mouth might not be able to detect how strong it is, but your liver will,” a server advised. A few detections later, two children screamed piercingly. The answer? More *Negligence*.

—Colin Stokes



THE NEW YORKER, JUNE 29, 2015

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THE TALK OF THE TOWN

COMMENT

TERRORISM IN CHARLESTON

During the second debate of the 2012 Presidential campaign, Mitt Romney repeated the frequently levelled Republican charge that it had taken Barack Obama many days to refer to the attack upon the U.S. Embassy in Benghazi as terrorism. Obama disputed that, and the two men argued back and forth until the moderator, Candy Crowley, intervened to say that the President had in fact referred to the incident as an “act of terror” the day after it happened. In the ensuing partisan scrum, conservatives and liberals debated the nuances between an “act of terror” and “terrorism,” proper. Beneath this philological fracas lay a truth evident to political speechwriters, eulogists, and news anchors: in times of tragedy, language matters.

The Charleston police were quick to label what happened in the sanctuary of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church last Wednesday night a “hate crime.” Many crimes are motivated by hatred, yet we reserve the term “hate crime” for an act motivated by an animus that has been extrapolated beyond any single individual and applied to an entire segment of the populace. The murder of nine black churchgoers during Bible study is an act so heinous as to be immediately recognizable as a hate crime. But it was not simply this. We should, for all the worst reasons, be adept by now at recognizing terrorism when we see it, and what happened in Charleston was nothing less than an act of terror.

Yet the term was missing from early descriptions of the incident. Senator Lindsey Graham, of South Carolina, in his initial assessment, said, “I just think he was one of these whacked-out kids. I don’t think it’s anything broader than that.” On Thursday, Governor Nikki Haley posted a statement on Facebook noting that “while we do not yet know all of the details, we do know that we’ll never understand what motivates anyone to enter one of our places of worship and take the life of another.” As a

matter of morality, the actions of Dylann Roof, who confessed to the murders, may be a conundrum, but his motivations are far from inscrutable.

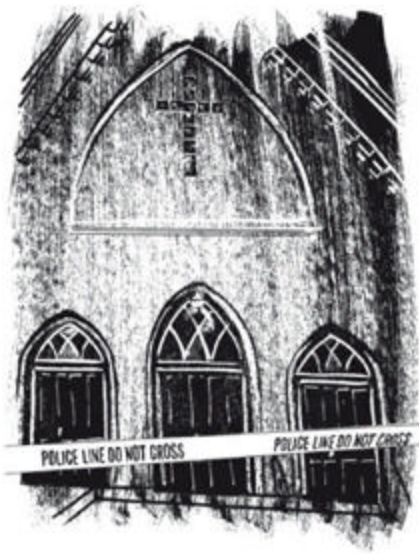
The Patriot Act defines “domestic terrorism” as activities that:

(A) involve acts dangerous to human life that are a violation of the criminal laws of the United States or of any State; (B) appear to be intended—(i) to intimidate or coerce a civilian population; (ii) to influence the policy of a government by intimidation or coercion; or (iii) to affect the conduct of a government by mass destruction, assassination, or kidnapping; and (C) occur primarily within the territorial jurisdiction of the United States.

At a minimum, the murders were intended to intimidate and coerce the black civilian population of Charleston, and beyond. A friend of Roof’s said that he had talked about wanting to start a “race war”—something that Roof also reportedly confessed to investigators. And he apparently based his acts on vintage rationalizations for terrorist violence in American history.

When Tywanza Sanders, a twenty-six-year-old man who was in the church, urged Roof to spare the lives of the congregants, Roof stated that his actions were necessary. “You

are raping our women and taking over the country,” he reportedly told Sanders, before killing him. A century ago, the film “The Birth of a Nation” exalted the Ku Klux Klan’s reign of terror during Reconstruction as the necessary deeds of men committed to defending white women from the sexual menace of newly emancipated black men. American anti-terrorism law has its legislative roots in the Klu Klux Klan Act of 1871, which broadly empowered President Ulysses S. Grant to prosecute Klan members for abrogating federal law regarding black rights. Nine counties in South Carolina were so deeply suffused with Klan influence that they were placed under martial law. The Klan emerged not solely



as an expression of concern for women but also in response to the growing political power of blacks in the postbellum South—people who, from the Klan’s vantage point, were taking over the country. In “The Prostrate State: South Carolina Under Negro Government,” published in 1873, the journalist James Shepherd Pike described a set of circumstances in which the white population was imperilled by the presence of black elected officials in the state legislature. The practice of lynching—there were more than a hundred and fifty lynchings in South Carolina between 1877 and 1950—facilitated the disenfranchisement of blacks and the retention of political power in white hands.

Twenty years ago, when Timothy McVeigh bombed the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building, in Oklahoma City, killing a hundred and sixty-eight people, the act was quickly understood as terrorism. We tend not to recall, however, that McVeigh was trying to realize the plot of “The Turner Diaries,” an apocalyptic novel that details a white man’s war against a federal government under the control of minorities and their white enablers. The F.B.I. Web page on the Murrah bombing lists it as “the worst act of homegrown terrorism in the nation’s history.” That designation overlooks the Tulsa riots of 1921, in which a white mob, enraged by a spurious allegation that a black teen-ager had attempted

to assault a young white woman, was deputized and given carte blanche to attack the city’s prosperous black Greenwood section, resulting in as many as three hundred black fatalities. From one perspective, the Murrah bombing was the worst act of domestic terrorism in our history, but, as the descendants of the Greenwood survivors know, it was likely not even the worst incident in *Oklahoma’s* history.

Another word has remained absent from the discussion of the events in Charleston: Obama. The President is an unnamed but implicit factor in the paranoid assertion—attributed to Roof but certainly not limited to him—that blacks are taking over the country. In January, 2008, Barack Obama won the South Carolina Democratic primary, largely on the strength of African-American votes; a state in the Deep South gave a black candidate a crucial push in his campaign for the White House. The recalcitrant pledges to “take our country back” that began after the Inauguration were simply more genteel expressions of the sentiments that Roof articulated.

The fact that Roof appears to have acted without accomplices will inevitably be taken as solace. He will be dismissed as a deranged loner, connected to nothing broader. This is untrue. Even if he acted by himself, he was not alone.

—*Jelani Cobb*

NEWARK POSTCARD SECURITY



Brother Darryl Young, a sexton at St. James’s African Methodist Episcopal Church, on Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Boulevard in Newark, greeted a visitor who stopped by on the morning after the shooting of nine people at the Emanuel A.M.E. Church in Charleston. Brother Young was sitting at a desk by the church’s side entry. “Welcome, brother. Let me show you to the sanctuary. Take your hat off, sir,” he said. “It’s another sad day. Yes, it’s just another sad day in this world. They’re going to be talking right here about the shootings. That’s at one o’clock, about ninety minutes from now. You’re welcome to wait. Take a look, walk around our beautiful church. Enjoy yourself. God bless you.”

St. James’s is a brownstone Gothic church, built in 1852, that sits on a rise not far from Newark’s downtown. Two bushes heavy with red tea roses bloomed by the front door, and some of the hymnal racks held wooden-handled

paper fans advertising the Alvin Ailey dance troupe and a funeral parlor just up the street. Empty for the moment, the church, with its high, vaulted ceiling, seemed to hum, as empty churches do. Tinted sunlight came through the windows of Tiffany stained glass and hung in the air. Television-news crews began to appear. “It’s kind of dim in here,” a young man with a camera said to a young woman, as they looked for light switches. By one o’clock, six or eight cameras on tripods occupied the pews just behind the front rows. Reporters clustered around. Microphones of various affiliations had been affixed to a lectern in front, and the lights had been turned up all the way.

The Reverend Ronald L. Slaughter, the church’s senior pastor, gathered clergy people, from Newark and elsewhere, in two lines flanking him at the lectern. They stood in unanimity—the men in dark suits, the women in dark or white dresses—about fifteen ministers in all. Bishop Rudy Carlton, of Full Gospel Baptist Church Fellowship, in Newark, began with a prayer for our broken hearts, and for Clementa Pinckney, the pastor of Emanuel A.M.E., who died “because of senseless behavior by someone who is deranged,” and for the Pinckney family.

Bishop Jethro James, a chaplain for the New Jersey State Police and an adviser to the Department of Homeland Security, talked about security workshops available to ushers, greeters, and other church personnel, and recommended an active-shooter workshop they could take to prepare them for a situation like the one in Charleston.

Reverend Slaughter said, “Security is vitally important. This church spends thousands and thousands a year for armed security. Persons cannot even gather in a household of faith and feel safe and secure. So I am unapologetic about any security detail we have here. In America you can get killed just for being black. You don’t have to do anything for someone to destroy your life. It is *hard* to be black in America. We have many law-enforcement personalities who come to this church armed, and we are not ashamed to have security in the church and outside on the street. People may say, ‘Well, Jesus didn’t have security.’ I reply, ‘They didn’t have *guns* in Jesus’ day.’ My ten-year-old daughter asked me, when she saw the news this morning, ‘Daddy, could that happen to you?’ My children deserve to have their daddy come home at the end of the day.”

Pastor Joe A. Carter, of the New

Hope Baptist Church, in Newark, who wore a lime-green shirt under his dark jacket, went up to the microphone. "My text for the day is this," he said. "Jesus told Peter, 'Sell what you have and get a sword.'" In conclusion, Reverend Slaughter added that the hard part of being a Christian is that we must respond to hate with love, and that someday we will have to forgive even the man who killed Reverend Pinckney and eight others at Emanuel A.M.E.

After a question period, as the camera crews were unplugging and wrapping up cables, members of St. James's went around greeting everybody and giving God's blessing. Sarah Slaughter (no relation to the Reverend), who was sitting near the visitor, said that she had been a member of this church for more than fifty years. "It's a wonderful church, and very, very active. We have two services here every Sunday, and one service at our church in South Orange. Reverend Slaughter is a vibrant preacher who loves his congregation. He's just thirty-nine years old. What happened in Charleston is terrible, just so terrible. I don't see any contradiction between Jesus saying 'Love your neighbor' and having armed security people in your church. You want to love your neighbor, but to love him you have to still be here."

—Ian Frazier

UP LIFE'S LADDER LANDLORD



Last week, with the status of a million rent-controlled and rent-stabilized New York City apartments stuck in legislative limbo, Mayor Bill de Blasio threatened to crack down on any landlords caught taking advantage of addled tenants. Meanwhile, one mega-landlord, the real-estate investor and art collector Aby Rosen, who's been in the news for edging out a notable lessee—the Four Seasons restaurant, in the Seagram Building—roamed the Bowery, relaxed and graham-cracker golden after a week in St. Bart's.

Rosen was downtown to visit another of his holdings, the 1898 Beaux-Arts Germania Bank, at 190 Bowery, which he purchased from the photographer Jay Maisel last year, for fifty-five million dollars. Maisel picked up the thirty-eight-thousand-square-foot space in 1966, for a hundred and two thousand dollars; he and his family lived on the top floor. Mysterious seventy-two-room single-family homes are something of a rarity in Manhattan, and there'd been a number of break-ins. A Rosen retainer named Joe stood guard inside. Propped against the wall next to him was a baseball bat.

Rosen, a walrusy white-haired fifty-five, greeted Joe, then turned to a visitor and described the ejection of the Maisels. After the sale, he said, with a German accent, "we gave them six months to find a new home." When they turned over the keys, the building was still full of their junk: "*Penthouse* and *Hustler* and *Playboy* magazines, everything catalogued, from 1956 to 1982," Rosen said. "There were five thousand screwdrivers, all lined up."

"It took three weeks, round the clock, to clear," Joe recalled. (Maisel denies leaving anything behind.)

Is Rosen a hoarder?

"I hoard only quality," he said. "If something is not good, I throw it away."

He explained that five stories of the building would be leased to a consortium of fashion agencies and archives. "We told them they could rent the whole space, but they had to restore it. There's no ripping out and going all modern." He was still looking for what he called a "'wow' retail partner" for the high-ceilinged lobby (rent: \$2.2 million).

Rosen wore pointed suède loafers, tight jeans, and a checked oxford shirt, severely unbuttoned, to reveal two necklaces—his wedding band on a cord ("I can't wear rings") and a string of pink coral beads, a gift from his children (aged twenty, eighteen, eight, and seven). He sprawled on a church pew in the center of the lobby. "Bowery's on fire. Bowery's cool. Bowery's smart," he said. "It's always been beautiful here—it was just dilapidated, run down." Now there's a John Varvatos store in the old CBGB and Cherche

Midi down the block, with a fifty-two-dollar dry-aged prime rib.

An art show curated by Vito Schnabel had just been taken down. "That's how it goes," Rosen said. "Art in, art out." Of his own art collection (Warhol, Basquiat, Koons, Hirst), he said, "I'm surprisingly very unattached to those things. I love them, but if you walk in my house and say, 'Can I buy it?' Absolutely. It's worth X, you can walk out with it." Last



Aby Rosen

fall, Rosen expressed a desire to remove "Le Tricorne," a beloved Picasso stage curtain, from the Four Seasons, where it had hung for half a century. The Landmarks Conservancy was not pleased. (Rosen eventually paid for the work to be restored and displayed in the New York Historical Society.)

The Four Seasons' lease expires in July, 2016, with the rent going from twenty dollars per square foot to a hundred and five; the restaurant's owners will be taking their operation elsewhere. Rosen has seized the chance to do some refurbishing; his new restaurant will feature nouvelle food—"How many times can you eat Dover sole and creamed spinach?" Referring to himself in the third person, he added, "It's not like Aby's doing an Indian or a Chinese restaurant." Rosen also hopes to expand the clientele. "You want to have the guy coming to the Four Seasons who has the ripped jeans and a T-shirt equally as much as you want the guy with the Tom Ford suit," he said. "Because the guy with the jeans, I promise you, has a lot more money."

A Landmarks Preservation Commission hearing was held in May to

review Rosen's proposal, after which the *Times* ran an article headlined "LANDMARKS COMMISSION REJECTS PLAN TO CHANGE INTERIOR OF FOUR SEASONS." Rosen had a different take: "We can change everything. We got from Landmarks basically every approval that we wanted, from the leathers to the panels to the woods." He added, "They made it sound like this is World War III coming. O.K., they didn't give us the hinges"—a proposed tweak to the panelled walls of the Pool Room. "Who cares?" Nor would they condone Rosen's removing the glass divider in the Grill Room. But he said, with a smile, "It's a loose item, so you can pick it up and move it anywhere you want."

Rosen stepped into a copperplated cage elevator, fitfully operated by Joe, and rode it to four. He came upon an old upright piano and gave its keys a joyful bang. He read aloud from a wall directory: "General Correspondence, Bank Trust Department, Personal Trust."

He exited—his plan was to drop by a Holiday Inn on Howard Street that he's converting into a "very cool hotel." For now, Rosen said, he'd leave the graffiti that covers the exterior of 190. "It gives the building some sort of aura, some sort of cachet," he said. "But, once the building is finished, who knows? I mean, graffiti is nice, like the gritty seventies of New York. But let's be honest—those days are gone."

—Emma Allen

THE PICTURES LIFE WITH FATHER



In 1996, when Maya Forbes was twenty-eight, an alumna of "The Larry Sanders Show" with a studio development deal, she introduced her future husband, Wally Wolodarsky, to her father, a descendant of two of the older and more prominent families in Boston. They were with Forbes's sister, China—the singer of a band called Pink Martini—and China's boyfriend at the time, the director Wes Anderson, who was working on "Rushmore." The group picked up Maya and China's dad, Cameron, at McLean, the psychiatric hospital outside Boston where he stayed during bipolar episodes, and took him to lunch. Cam ordered a mushroom omelette, mushroom toast, mixed mushrooms, and a giant mushroom that took up an entire plate. He was a heavy smoker. After lunch, they dropped him back off at McLean. He popped in to get something and emerged with two cigarettes in his mouth. Wolodarsky took a picture of him smoking both, an arm around each daughter. Anderson gave Bill Murray two cigarettes in "Rushmore" and told Maya she should forget about what-

ever movie she was working on and write the story of her father instead.

Last week, Forbes's movie, "Infinitely Polar Bear," opened, with Mark Ruffalo as Cam and Zoe Saldana as Maya and China's mother, Peggy, who is black. Maya Forbes wrote and directed it, Wolodarsky produced it, and Imogene, their thirteen-year-old daughter, stars as the young Maya. The title comes from a phrase Cam once used to describe his condition on a McLean intake form. The movie is set in Cambridge in 1978 and tells the story of how Cam, recently recovered from a breakdown, took over the care of Maya and China, aged ten and eight, while Peggy, in order to support them, went to New York to get an M.B.A. and, eventually, a job at the brokerage firm E. F. Hutton. Maya says, "My mother always said, 'If only we could have slapped him in a suit and rolled him into J. M. Forbes,' the family firm." It wasn't going to happen. Cam worked at a hardware store and showed up at J. M. Forbes wearing swim trunks.

Forbes and Wolodarsky live in Santa Monica, in a Craftsman-style house that was built in 1935. They have three children: Clementine, who has caramel skin, a cleft chin, and curly hair; Imogene, who has straight brown hair and dark eyes; and Hackley, a blond-haired, blue-eyed boy, who, Forbes says, looks exactly the way she did as a kid. ("I feel black, but I don't look black," she says. "It's all very confusing.") The other day, they sat around their dining-room table eating blueberry pie baked by Wally's dad. Wally, who was wearing shorts and black socks with Birkenstocks, did a crossword puzzle. It was important, Maya said, that the movie feel as though a family had made it. "The guy who plays a money manager in the movie is my cousin, who *is* a money manager, at J. M. Forbes," she said.

The family seemed oblivious of Cam and Peggy's struggles. "There was this disdain for striving, which I found totally crippling," Maya said. "My grandmother told a great story about her aunts. Somebody asked them, 'Where do you get your hats?' And the aunts said, 'We don't *get* our hats—we *have* our hats.' You weren't supposed to want things, you weren't allowed to talk about money." Maya and China grew up in a small



"Let's see if there's another witch's cottage with a better candy selection."

rent-controlled apartment; the family car once caught fire while they were in it. "You have lots of access to things, but you don't *have* anything," she said. "You'd drive the worst car to this house"—the mansion her great-grandmother Gaga lived in—"and have this butler serve you lunch." Maya and China went to public schools until their mother made enough money to send them to private ones. Eventually, they went to Exeter and Harvard, two schools from which Cam had been expelled.

As adolescents, the girls gave Cam



Imogene Wolodarsky and Maya Forbes

hell. "We had no interest in being well behaved," Maya said. "He'd say we were very 'obstreperous' and 'recalcitrant.' He loved that we were obstreperous." Maya and China ferociously missed their mother, who visited on weekends. China has a song called "'78": "'78 is the year you went to New York. '79 is the year I don't remember." For Cam, looking after two boisterous girls was stabilizing; after his daughters left for boarding school, he started having periodic breakdowns again. When he got pancreatic cancer, in 1998, Maya bought a house in Cambridge so she could take care of him; he died there that same year. She and Wally are working on another movie, a what-if version, in which Cam lives to see his daughters' grownup lives.

Imogene had just performed in a play at her all-girls school. She said she wasn't sure her parents were ready for her to pursue an acting career. "I *want* to . . ."

"Wally!" Maya called. "Professional acting for Imogene?"

Wally was squeezing lemons in the kitchen. "When she can drive herself to auditions and fly to Vancouver and stay there on her own," he said. "Until then, you are wholly dependent on us for your parts."

—Dana Goodyear

DEPT. OF BROWSING HANDS



Evan Michelson, an owner of Obscura Antiques and Oddities, on Avenue A at Thirteenth Street, was waiting the other morning for the composer Danny Elfman, who lives in Los Angeles. Obscura sells "medical, scientific, and natural-history objects that are often overlooked," Michelson said. "Things that tell a story but tend to be discarded." Elfman, who will appear in July at Lincoln Center as part of "Danny Elfman's Music from the Films of Tim Burton," is an ardent collector of peculiar things, some of which frighten him.

When Elfman arrived, he said that he began collecting when he was travelling the world after graduating from high school. "I was in Bamako, Mali, and I bought a standing, smiling skeleton carved from a single piece of bone, probably an elephant bone," he said. "There was a guy in the market with three of them. I negotiated for a day, with breaks for lunch."

Elfman also bought a mummified monkey's paw. "When I was a child, the story my mother always told to scare me was 'The Monkey's Paw,'" he said. The story concerns a man and woman who get three wishes that turn out badly. "Around Mali there were women who sold lizard heads and rooster feet and powders," Elfman said. "They were the ones who sold the materials for casting spells. The hardest thing to find, and the rarest, would be the mummified monkey's paw. A tiny hand. Each finger would be used for a different spell. A few times, I saw one, and it was withdrawn immediately. 'It's not for you,' she'd say. 'Too much power.' One day in the Bamako market, I saw one, and the woman offered it to me and said, 'For

you?' I put it in a box and wrote, 'Do not open under any circumstances until I return,' and sent it to my mother. Of course I knew she wouldn't be able to not open it. She told me that she waited three months but confirmed later that she only waited about five minutes, and screamed so loud that it was like Krakatoa—the whole neighborhood heard it. Those objects kind of set my path for the next forty-four years."

Elfman's collection is sprawling and "breaks into categories," he said. "Antique scientific instruments, anatomical drawings, archeological things—shrunk heads, carved skulls from Borneo and Peru, old taxidermy. I collect antique dolls like crazy. My whole place is filled with them. Ones that look like they would have scared me when I was a child. I was terrified of old dolls as a child. Also ventriloquists' puppets."

Elfman and Michelson talked about their late friend, a collector named Elli Buk, who had a store in SoHo that specialized in old scientific instruments. "He knew about everything," Elfman said. "I bought about twenty weird electrical things with transformers and switches recently. Elli would have known what they were. I don't dare plug any of them in. I'm looking for some electrical wizard who will say, 'Oh, yeah, I'm really glad you didn't plug this in.'" He added, "That stuff sells cheap."

"People shy away from it," Michelson said.

"You don't want to sell something that will kill someone," Elfman said. Michelson held out some antique prints. The one Elfman liked showed the nerves of the body. Then he found a pair of ceramic hands from some kind of dummy. "I collect hands," he said. "It's because of a movie called 'The Beast with Five Fingers,' which I saw when I was about six. After that, I would have this dream of being pursued by a hand. My parents would be in the dream, and they would say, 'Just ignore it,' but I couldn't. It was clearly following me."

Stepping to the counter, Elfman said, "I'm going to go home with the nerves. And I'm going to ask about this box." He picked up a box from a table. It looked like a box for a jigsaw puzzle, and on it was written "The Psychology of the Hand Simplified."

—Alec Wilkinson

PRISON REVOLT

A former law-and-order conservative takes a lead on criminal-justice reform.

BY BILL KELLER



In the mid-nineteen-eighties, shortly after the convictions of six members of the House of Representatives and one senator in the F.B.I. bribery sting code-named Abscam, one of the bureau's anticorruption units turned its attention to the California legislature, where an informant had reported that lawmakers were on the take. Agents posing as representatives of a shrimp-processing company announced plans to build a plant near Sacramento, provided that a state-loan guarantee could be procured. They offered to reward legislators who would help secure their financing. The operation, inevitably, was known as Shrimpscam.

Patrick J. Nolan, an earnest law-and-order conservative representing Glendale and Burbank, was the leader of the Republican minority in the assembly. He had already voted for a bill making the company eligible for the guarantee, but Governor George Deukmejian, who was aware of the sting, had vetoed it. Now one of the agents wanted to meet Nolan to entice him to intercede with Deukmejian. On June 29, 1988, Nolan and a legislative aide, Karin Watson, arrived at a bugged suite in the Sacramento Hyatt Regency, across from the Capitol. They declined the agent's offer of champagne (it was not yet noon) in

favor of Diet Pepsi, admired the view, engaged in some awkward small talk, and left twenty minutes later, with two five-thousand-dollar checks. One was made out to a Republican campaign committee. The other was left blank, apparently to see if Nolan would pocket the money. He filled in the name of a Party PAC.

Pat Nolan now lives outside Washington, D.C., in Leesburg, Virginia. Recently, he rummaged in his basement for a copy of the F.B.I. audio-tape of the meeting. (There was a video, but Nolan's copy seems to have got lost when he moved east, in 1996.) Nothing on the muddy soundtrack, which plays today like an outtake from "American Hustle," is explicitly transactional, but the agent presses for help in changing the Governor's mind, and Nolan explains that it would be beneficial for business in general if Republicans could capture a majority in the assembly.

The sting eventually resulted in a dozen indictments, but it took five years, and Karin Watson's cooperation, for prosecutors to file charges against Nolan. On April 27, 1993, he was indicted on six counts, including racketeering, conspiracy, extortion, and money laundering. Nolan insists that he voted for the loan because the fictional venture promised jobs, and that he took the contributions because that's how people help elect legislators who see things their way. But Nolan's lawyers concluded that a public that had recently endured the scandals of Watergate, Abscam, and Iran-Contra would not be sympathetic to a politician's claim that he was just doing his job. Nolan calculated that, if found guilty, he could be in prison until his young children were in their twenties. So he quit his seat and admitted to one felony count of racketeering in exchange for a sentence of thirty-three months.

Criminal-justice reformers like to say that if a conservative is a liberal who has been mugged, a liberal is a conservative who has served time. Nolan did not emerge from prison any less conservative, but he says he experienced a profound disillusionment, which has led him to play a central

Patrick J. Nolan's own experience led him to challenge decades of conservative policy.

role in a cause that is only now finding its moment. These days, it is hard to ignore a rising conservative clamor to rehabilitate the criminal-justice system. Conservatives are as quick as liberals to note that the United States, a country with less than five per cent of the world's population, houses nearly twenty-five per cent of the world's prisoners. Some 2.2 million Americans are now incarcerated—about triple the number locked up in the nineteen-eighties, when, in a panic over drugs and urban crime, conservative legislators demanded tougher policies, and liberals who feared being portrayed as weak went along with them. African-Americans are nearly six times as likely as whites to be incarcerated, and Latinos are more than twice as likely. More than forty per cent of released offenders return to prison within three years.

Several Republican Presidential candidates—Rand Paul, Jeb Bush, Rick Perry, and Ted Cruz—have been embraced by Right on Crime, a campaign to promote “successful, conservative solutions” to the punitive excesses of American law and order. In February, the American Conservative Union's Conservative Political Action Conference, which serves as an audition for right-wing Presidential aspirants, featured three panels on criminal-justice reform, including one called Prosecutors Gone Wild. Bernard Kerik, who was Rudolph Giuliani's police commissioner and served three years in prison for tax fraud and other crimes, now promotes an agenda of reforms, including voting rights for ex-felons. The libertarian billionaires Charles and David Koch are donating money to the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, to help insure that indigent defendants get competent legal representation, and they are co-sponsoring conferences on judicial reform with the American Civil Liberties Union.

In Congress and the states, conservatives and liberals have found common ground on such issues as cutting back mandatory-minimum sentences; using probation, treatment, and community service as alternatives to prison for low-level crimes; raising the age of juvenile-court jurisdictions; limit-

ing solitary confinement; curtailing the practice of confiscating assets; re-writing the rules of probation and parole to avoid sending offenders back to jail on technicalities; restoring education and job training in prisons; allowing prisoners time off for rehabilitation; and easing the reentry of those who have served time by expunging some criminal records and by lowering barriers to employment, education, and housing. As David Dagan and Steven M. Teles write, in the *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, “Retrenching the carceral state is becoming as orthodox on the Right as building it was just a few short years ago.” They conclude that this has created a “Nixon goes to China” opportunity to reverse decades of overkill.

This conservative transformation is often portrayed in the media as a novelty, and some progressives regard it as a ploy to cut taxes and turn prisons over to the private corrections industry. Yet it has deep roots and a tangle of motives, one of which is indeed a belief that downsizing prisons promises taxpayers some relief. (Locking up an inmate for a year can cost as much as tuition at a good college.) But for many conservatives, Nolan says, reducing spending is “ancillary.” “It's human dignity that really motivates us.”

In September, I met Nolan in Washington, D.C., at a German deli downstairs from his office at the American Conservative Union Foundation, where he is the director of the new Center for Criminal Justice Reform. At sixty-five, he is tall and rotund, with a round, amiable face and a thatch of gray-white hair. Since 2011, he has suffered from restricted lung capacity, complicated by a lingering case of Lyme disease, and he uses a portable oxygen tank. But he still works full time, tracking the progress of reforms state by state, drafting op-eds for fellow-conservatives, planning conferences, rallying state legislators by phone, and firing off volleys on Twitter.

There are two main styles of Southern California Republicanism: the home-spun anecdotal optimism of Ronald

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Reagan and the uneasy conspiratorial resentment of Richard Nixon. Nolan is in the Reagan mold, upbeat and engaging even when he is describing what he regards as the transformative injustice of his life. He grew up on Crenshaw Boulevard in Los Angeles; his father was an accountant, and his mother, he said, “majored in raising kids”—nine of them. By the time he was old enough to have a paper route, the integrated middle-class neighborhood had turned rough. The family was devoutly Catholic, and Nolan remains so.

At Notre Dame High School, he joined the Young Americans for Freedom—he and his friends liked to heckle Jane Fonda at anti-Vietnam War rallies, chanting, “Barbarella bombed, why can’t Nixon?”—and in 1966 he was a volunteer for Reagan’s first gubernatorial campaign. He tried three times to enlist in the Marine officer-training program, but each time he failed the physical, owing to a knee injury suffered

when a car knocked him off his bike on his delivery route. After graduating from the University of Southern California and then its law school, he represented white-collar defendants in civil cases for a few years, served part time as a reserve deputy sheriff, and went into politics. By the time of Shrimpscam, he was widely viewed as a potential speaker of the assembly, even a plausible candidate for governor or for the Senate.

“I went to the legislature very pro cop and with a get-tough-on-crime attitude,” Nolan told me. He wanted to reinstate the death penalty, which the Supreme Court had temporarily suspended. He believed that the exclusionary rule, which disallows evidence improperly obtained by the police, had become a loophole that lawyers exploited to allow guilty clients to go free. He excoriated a colleague in the assembly for proposing a law that would extend workers’ compensation to inmates injured in prison

labor programs. And he was a leading sponsor of a prison-building boom in the state, which included, to his eventual regret, the Pelican Bay supermax facility, where inmates are kept in long-term solitary.

The F.B.I. sting, he says, dispelled his unconditional faith in law enforcement. In Nolan’s telling of it, trophy-hunting agents browbeat his aides and his campaign supporters to build a case against him, leaking tidbits to the press in the hope of breaking his resolve. The prosecutor loaded the charge sheet so heavily that Nolan concluded that he couldn’t risk going before a jury. Like roughly ninety-five per cent of people convicted in America, he pleaded guilty and took a lesser sentence rather than take his chances at trial. He began to wonder how many of the people he had dismissed as bad guys had simply succumbed to prosecutorial bullying. He said, “I saw that the F.B.I. and the government prosecutors weren’t interested in the truth, and that was a shock to me.”

By the standards of American incarceration, Nolan had it easy. He served twenty-five months in two prisons that housed the least menacing felons. The Federal Prison Camp at Dublin, near San Francisco, was a compound of former Army barracks surrounded by landscaped flower gardens. There was a small coterie of white-collar criminals, but the majority of the inmates were blacks and Latinos serving time for relatively minor drug convictions. Nolan helped organize religious-study groups, and—to judge by his accounts in an unpublished memoir—he treated his fellow-inmates as a constituency to be charmed. (He still corresponds with some of them.) From prison, Nolan produced a chatty newsletter that his wife, Gail, distributed to some two thousand supporters. He had regular visits from his family and a loyal band of political friends. After ten months, he was transferred to Geiger Corrections Center, near Spokane, where the supervision was even less oppressive. Still, his time in prison exposed him to what he came to see as the cynical cycle of American justice: sweep up young men, mostly from broken families in underprivileged neighborhoods,



put them away for a while, send them back onto the streets with no skills, and repeat. To call this a “corrections” system seemed a sour joke.

“I had assumed they did all they could to help prepare the guys to return to society and make a better life,” Nolan told me. “But they were just warehousing them.” There was a pervasive sense of defeat. “The implication is: you’re worthless, you come from nothing, you are nothing, you’ll never be anything.” He added that when prisoners were released the guards would say, “See you in a few months.” He was surprised, too, at the number of elderly and infirm inmates. In his memoir, he wrote that “incarcerating people who aren’t a physical threat to society is expensive and counterproductive”—something that “only a nation that is rich and vindictive” would do.

Nolan was still an inmate when he ventured into the politics of reform. In 1994, in the *California Political Review*, he published an attack on that year’s crime bill—President Clinton’s signature contribution to mass incarceration, which earmarked \$9.7 billion for prisons, imposed tougher sentences, and, among many punitive provisions, eliminated college grants for prison inmates. Many Republicans turned against the bill, because it also included a ban on assault rifles and funded remedial inner-city programs, such as “midnight basketball.” Nolan’s objections were different: he argued that the bill would bring profits to the prison industry but do little to reduce crime. He wrote, “Above all, conservatives should ask themselves how likely it is that these bloated bureaucracies . . . will turn out to be any less rapacious, irresponsible, or concerned with the rights of ordinary Americans than, say, the IRS, just because they are packaged and marketed under the dishonest label ‘tough on crime.’”

The following year, when Congress was reviewing the hundred-to-one disparity in the penalties for crack versus powder cocaine, Nolan used his phone privileges to urge Republican representatives to treat the two drugs equally. “The kid on the bunk above me was doing ten years for crack,” Nolan told me. “There’s essentially no

difference” between the two forms of the drug, he said, “but so many blacks were doing absurdly long sentences for crack.” Nolan says that he helped line up support from thirty-four Republican members of the House, but lost half of them when Clinton’s Attorney General, Janet Reno, endorsed the harsher punishments. “How could they let Janet Reno get to their right on drug policy?” he asked.

Unlike most parolees, Nolan had a job waiting for him. Charles Colson, a Nixon White House aide who had become a devout Evangelical Christian shortly before serving seven months in a federal prison for his part in the Watergate scandal, had organized the Prison Fellowship, a network of volunteers who visited inmates and promoted faith as a path back into society’s good graces. When the volunteers reported appalling conditions and a permeating sense of hopelessness in the prisons, Colson decided to launch a political offshoot, called the Justice Fellowship. The idea was to build a grassroots campaign to lobby Congress and state lawmakers for more humane treatment of inmates during and after incarceration, but Colson was so busy running the evangelical network that the effort languished. Colson had heard of Nolan through mutual Republican friends, who portrayed him as equally at ease talking about God and dealing with politicians. So in the spring of 1996, as Nolan was preparing to leave prison, Colson asked him to move to Washington and run the Justice Fellowship. Once there, Nolan realized that a grassroots network was already in place: fifty thousand Prison Fellowship volunteers and a couple of hundred thousand donors.

Their first test came later that year, with a proposal moving through Congress that would have sharply limited the right of inmates to file lawsuits under the First Amendment. Many prosecutors favored the measure as a way to curb nuisance lawsuits, but Nolan argued that it would also inhibit legitimate religious freedom. “You’d get some inmate suing for steak dinners on the grounds that he belonged to the Church of Filet Mignon,” he said. “But you also had war-

dens who wouldn’t serve kosher meals to Orthodox Jews.” Crosses that Latino prisoners fashioned from plastic trash bags were banned in some prisons as “gang attire.” Nolan and Colson asked their network to contact their legislators and raise the issue at town-hall meetings. Nolan organized a press conference in which a Republican and a Democrat—Senators John Ashcroft and Edward Kennedy—defended the rights of inmates. The proposal died.

Next, Nolan sought to enlist the fellowship in the campaign against prison rape. Studies showed that as many as one inmate in five was the victim of sexual assault, by another inmate or by prison staff. Such attacks, when inmates dared to report them, were dismissed as a hazard of incarceration. “Prison rape was a secular issue, but with moral overtones,” Nolan told me. The direct-mail firm that handled Colson’s fund-raising “didn’t want to touch the issue,” he said. “They thought, Oh, it makes people uncomfortable. It’ll turn people off.” But the volunteers agreed to rally conservative support, and, in conjunction with human-rights organizations and liberal groups, they helped secure the unanimous passage of the Prison Rape Elimination Act, in 2003. Nolan is the first to admit that the law hasn’t come close to eliminating the problem. But it did make the Justice Fellowship a force for reform beyond issues of strictly religious interest. Its members subsequently helped on the passage of the Second Chance Act, which provides federal grants to help released convicts reënter society, and the Fair Sentencing Act, which reduced the disparity—to eighteen to one—between sentences for crack and powder cocaine.

During those years, Nolan discovered a number of prominent right-wing figures who had come to support criminal-justice reform from various directions. Some, like David Keene, the former president of the National Rifle Association, whose son was sentenced to ten years for a road-rage shooting, were, like Colson and Nolan himself, influenced by personal experience. Grover Norquist, an activist famous for extracting no-new-taxes pledges from members of Congress, was attracted to the issue partly by the odor of wasted

tax money, and became an early Nolan ally. Richard Viguerie, who refined direct-mail fund-raising in the service of the far right, also came to the campaign early, on moral grounds. (A substantial minority on the right, notably Catholics, have turned against capital punishment. Nolan and Viguerie are among them.) Edwin Meese, President Reagan's Attorney General, for the most part a classic law-and-order conservative, faulted the system for failing to provide indigent defendants access to adequate legal counsel and opposed the reclassification of minor regulatory violations as felonies. (A favorite conservative talking point is that Texas has eleven felonies related to the harvesting of oysters.) Former House Speaker Newt Gingrich, a co-author of the 1994 Contract with America, with its unforgiving anticrime provisions, told me that he was persuaded to embrace reform because of the high recidivism rates. "It's just stunningly stupid to have a system that keeps returning people to jail," he told me.

After George W. Bush was reelected, in 2004, and the Republican majorities in Congress were strengthened, Nolan attended a seminar in Richmond, Virginia, where conservatives debated what to do with their consolidated power. Norquist and Keene separately urged him to pull together the factions of conservatism on justice reform. So he began hosting occasional off-the-record lunches where you might have seen libertarians from the Cato Institute, advocates of judicial restraint from the Federalist Society, social conservatives from the Family Research Council, and hard-core fiscal conservatives like Norquist. Attendees found a unifying theme in the arrogance and the overreach of government and the toll that it took on individual freedom and responsibility. Nolan became, mostly behind the scenes, a trusted broker, strategist, theoretician, fundraiser, diplomat, and whip. "If Pat says something, it's kind of the final word," Viguerie told me.

One place where conservative interests coalesced was the Texas Public Policy Foundation, a free-market think tank based in Austin, which helped convert then Governor Rick

Perry from an indiscriminate law-and-order enthusiast to a self-styled apostle of pragmatic reform. In 2007, Perry joined reformers in the state legislature in a plan to cancel a major expansion of the state's prisons and redirect some of the savings to addiction treatment for low-level drug offenders, as an alternative to incarceration. The prison population dropped sufficiently that Texas closed one facility in 2011 and two more in 2013.

The feat was less impressive than it seemed. When Perry became governor, in 2000, he inherited the largest and fastest-growing prison population in the country, the legacy of a prison-building program under his predecessors Ann Richards and George W. Bush. The state could easily afford to release hundreds of minor offenders without risking a spike in crime. Still, Perry's example was one that Nolan and others could hold out to politicians who worried about being pilloried as soft on crime. Vikrant Reddy, a former Texas Public Policy Foundation lawyer who is now a criminal-justice fellow at a think tank backed by Charles Koch, said, "This is the ultimate hang-'em-high state. If you say you've done these impressive things on prison reform in Vermont, nobody's really listening. If you say they did it in Texas, then you have a captive audience."

The next step was to replicate the Texas story in other states. Marc Levin,



a conservative lawyer who headed the Texas foundation's justice-reform operation, came up with a catchy name—Right on Crime—for a new advocacy group set up out of the foundation in 2010 to share policy ideas and mobilize prominent conservatives for reform. Levin and Nolan realized that, instead of building a new coalition of name-brand conservatives for each battle, they could get supporters to sign on to a statement of principles—

transparency and accountability, individual liberty, cost-effectiveness, a chance for rehabilitation, limited government, a voice for crime victims, a preference for solutions based on family and community. That way, the signatories' names could be invoked without having to ask for permission every time.

"Sort of like Henry Ford inventing the assembly line, it allowed us to handle a large number of issues," Nolan said. Variations on the Texas approach to reducing the prison population have since been adopted in Georgia, South Carolina, Ohio, Kentucky, and Mississippi. "You now have all these conservative and liberal governors touching what used to be a third rail," said John Malcolm, a former prosecutor who oversees the Edwin Meese III Center for Legal and Judicial Studies, at the Heritage Foundation. Last year in California, Right on Crime, with financing from B. Wayne Hughes, Jr., the son of a storage-locker billionaire, and with Nolan working the phones to legislators in his home state, provided support for Proposition 47, which downgraded minor drug and property crimes to misdemeanors. It passed in November.

Although right and left generally agree on the scale of the problem, they diverge on the question of its causes. The view of many on the left is distilled to its essence by the legal scholar Michelle Alexander in her best-selling 2010 book, "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness." Alexander posited that the criminal-justice system as it exists today is the product of the country's economic and racial history.

The fact that nearly a third of black men in this country are destined to spend time in jail or prison, Alexander argued, cannot be explained as simply a society defending itself against urban predators. In her view, Nixon's tough-on-crime agenda and Reagan's escalation of the war on drugs were aimed, consciously or not, at halting the advances of the civil-rights movement and perpetuating the neglect of the underclass. While race

has influenced the administration of justice in this country from its beginning, she says, since the nineteen-eighties mass incarceration has decimated minority neighborhoods to the extent that it has become a malign form of containment. "It is no longer concerned primarily with the prevention and punishment of crime, but rather with the management and control of the dispossessed," she wrote. On many days, the news seems to provide evidence for Alexander's case: racial profiling; stop-and-frisk; the targeted prosecution of drug laws in black and brown communities; the disproportionate arrest, remand, and sentencing of minorities; the xenophobic alarm about immigration; and the quick resort to force by police and corrections officers against citizens of color.

Alexander told me that during the five years that she has been travelling around the country talking about her book she has often found conservatives "more advanced in their thinking" than liberal politicians, who, after many years of having to play tough for voters, "have become comfortable with the criminal-justice system as it is." Religious conservatives in particular, she said, "really appreciate the moral and spiritual dimensions of mass incarceration."

As a theory of how we got to this point, Alexander's view supplies a powerful logic but is of little comfort to advocates of piecemeal reforms, which she regards as "utterly insufficient." She told me, "Some people who might have spent more than a decade behind bars may spend only a few years. Children who might not otherwise have ever known their parents may have a shot at having relationships with their mother or father, and people may receive additional support—job training or education." However, she added, "I'm deeply concerned that many people will mistake these reforms for the kind of cultural and institutional transformation that is necessary." The current bipartisan ferment might improve a few lives, she conceded, but repairing criminal justice requires "a radical restructuring of our society," potentially driven by "third parties and new political formations"



"And one more water."

rather than by Republicans or Democrats. She told me, "I'm not enlisting the very people who constructed the system to take charge of now reforming it."

"Michelle Alexander has gotten a lot of publicity, and a lot of people have been attracted by it," Nolan said. "But I think it's counterproductive to go and start off by punching people in the face, saying, 'You're part of the white slave-master mentality that has done this.'" On the right, the excesses of the system are most often explained as the result of too much government coddling and a breakdown of families, resulting in a surge of crime and a corresponding rise in public alarm. The war on drugs and the ensuing explosion of the prison population, many conservatives argue, were not acts of racism but responses to legitimate fears. But Nolan says, "Our rhetoric helped grow the climate in which the government could overreach. Prison became the default choice when it should be the last resort. I guess I'm somewhat defensive, because a lot of liberals say that this is a way of making up for the wrong things we did. I think that both hands were on the knife."

Nixon and Reagan—and the 1988 campaign of George H. W. Bush, with the infamous Willie Horton TV ad—tapped a vein of white anxiety, but liberals were co-architects of the current situation. The "war on drugs" had no more outspoken champion than the liberal Massachusetts Democrat and House Speaker Thomas P. O'Neill, Jr. Reacting to the death from a crack overdose of Len Bias, a promising Boston Celtics recruit, O'Neill helped push through the 1986 Anti-Drug Abuse Act, which imposed mandatory sentences, asset forfeitures, and the severe sanctions on crack. The 1994 crime bill was introduced by a Delaware liberal, Joe Biden, and championed by Bill Clinton. (In this Presidential campaign, Hillary Clinton can expect to be attacked for her husband's tough-on-crime expedience—from the right.)

The year that Clinton signed that bill, thirty-seven per cent of Americans identified crime as the nation's most important problem. By 2012, the number was two per cent. The crime rate has plateaued at its lowest level in decades, a development variously attributed to the ebbing of the crack epidemic, an improved economy,

smarter policing, the aging of the baby boomers, and, at huge expense, mass incarceration. A new generation has come of age in safer cities, and now Democratic officials who dared not endorse less punitive approaches to crime have conservatives to give them political cover. "What I tell conservatives is liberals cannot lead on reforming the criminal-justice system," Viguerie told me. "And so, if conservatives don't lead, nothing happens."

There is a tendency, on both sides, to make ending mass incarceration seem easier than it is. In March, I went to Washington for the Bipartisan Summit on Criminal Justice Reform, hosted by the liberal activist Van Jones, the Democratic consultant Donna Brazile, Gingrich, and Nolan, and attended by several hundred reform enthusiasts. Jones called it "the Woodstock of criminal justice." The only discordant note I heard came from Senator Cory Booker, the New Jersey Democrat who campaigned as a criminal-justice reformer. One of the sponsors of the summit—a roster that included Koch Industries and the A.C.L.U.—was #cut50, a bipartisan organization that advocates halving the prison population over the next ten years. (Nolan is listed as a partner on the group's Web site, although he says that thirty per cent is a more realistic goal.) To accomplish such a drastic cut, Booker suggested, would entail releasing not only pot smokers and shoplifters but also people guilty of more serious crimes. He invited the audience to talk about reexamining some offenses now categorized as violent. Nobody seemed inclined to take him up on the offer.

There are whole areas of policy where bipartisan consensus remains far out of reach. Guns, for starters, are untouchable. (Norquist likes to provoke liberals with the creative theory that the crime rate has fallen because more Americans have concealed-carry permits.) For most Republicans, out-right legalization of drugs, even marijuana, "is one we can't touch," Nolan says. The idea of restoring voting rights to ex-felons, which has the support of Rand Paul and Nolan as well as Bernie Kerik, appeals to many Democrats

but terrifies most Republicans. "They have this image of hordes of criminals" flocking to the polls to vote for Democrats, Nolan said. Conservatives tend to look more favorably on privatizing prisons, prison services, and probation, a scheme that liberals view with deep distrust. The death penalty, which divides the right, is not on the shared agenda.

The most significant question is whether conservatives are prepared to face the cost of the remedies, from in-prison education and job training to more robust probationary supervision and drug and mental-health treatment. Joan Petersilia, a criminologist who teaches at the Stanford Law School, points to the last great American exercise in decarceration, half a century ago: President Kennedy's Community Mental Health Act, which aimed to reduce by half the number of patients in state mental hospitals. The promised alternatives—hundreds of community care facilities—were never fully funded, and thousands of deeply troubled people were liberated into homelessness. The mentally ill now make up a substantial portion of inmates in state prisons and county jails.

"The direction forward is not really clear, because, on the one hand, the right is saying less government, less spending," Petersilia told me. "And the left is saying we need more investment." She offers the example of California, which for nearly five years has been under a Supreme Court order to cull the overcrowded prisons that Nolan once helped build. "The success story of downsizing prisons in California is like nothing the nation has ever experienced," she said. "We have downsized in less than five years twenty-five per cent of all prison populations. But look what is happening at the local, community level, which is that they've upsized jails, and they've got a homeless population, they've got police officers complaining about the mentally ill. We didn't answer the question: if not prisons, what?"

Nolan agrees about the cost of alternatives: "In each of the Right on Crime states, we have insisted that a large part of the savings be put back into the system." As for his home state, Nolan says, "we were not a part of

that mess." Nolan thinks that Governor Jerry Brown failed to plan adequate prison alternatives because "he just wanted to get the court off his back." When conservatives did venture into California, last November, to help pass Proposition 47, the measure required that two-thirds of any money saved be funnelled into alternative correctional programs. Nolan said, "Conservatives have insisted that money be plowed into services because we know that just releasing prisoners or diverting them from prisons without services would increase crime." That is true, but it tends to be relegated to the fine print in conservative reform literature. The headlines promise tremendous savings to taxpayers.

Nolan has another worry: that one sensational crime, or a spike in the crime rate, or the distraction of more polarizing issues could send Republicans and Democrats back to their corners. "We've all said we're one bad incident away from having this erode on us," he said. But if the bipartisan movement can accomplish the things it agrees on, Nolan has a wish list of additional reforms that he will pitch to conservatives. He would like to see abusive prosecutors lose their licenses. He would require the police to videotape interrogations from beginning to end, not just a confession that may have been improperly extracted.

And, mindful of the prisoners who have been exonerated while waiting on death row, he would like to end capital punishment. In the last week of May, Nolan was urging Republican state senators in Nebraska to repeal that state's death penalty, over the governor's veto. The repeal prevailed without a vote to spare, making Nebraska the first conservative state in four decades to do away with the death penalty. Nolan was jubilant.

"I think the Nebraska vote is a pivot point," he e-mailed me. "You can't get more red than Nebraska, and the cooperation of flinty conservatives and urban blacks was unstoppable. I think they really enjoyed working together and finding common ground. That is the experience that I have had as well." In his sign-off, he turned to Scripture: "The lamb and the lion shall lie down together." ♦

JUICE CONTRACT

BY MONICA HEISEY



This is an agreement between Juice Your Own Adventure and _____ (hereafter referred to as the Juicee).

WHEREAS, the Juicee has acknowledged purchase of the Kale-ing Me Softly Clean Mean Green Canteen (hereafter referred to as the Juice) from Juice Your Own Adventure; and

WHEREAS, the Juicee will now be exiting the store in possession of the Juice.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Juicee makes the following agreements:

1. TASTE

Under no circumstances will the Juicee ever refer to the actual taste or the temperature of the juice. Acceptable responses to the question “Sure it’s full of vegetables, but how does it taste?” are “I feel great”; “It’s just good to know I’m getting so many vegetables at

once”; and “It’s very full of vegetables.”

2. COST

Under no circumstances is the Juicee to complain about or negatively refer to the cost of the Juice. It is agreed upon by both the Juicee and Juice Your Own Adventure that \$10.95 is a reasonable amount of money to pay for what is effectively tepid soup. If/when the cost of the Juice is brought up by others, please see Section 1 (“Taste”), above, for acceptable responses. The Juicee acknowledges that it really is good to know that he/she is getting so many vegetables at once.

3. INSTAGRAM AND SOCIAL-MEDIA DISCLOSURE

Upon purchasing the Juice, the Juicee will *immediately* share this purchase with his/her social-media circle via no fewer than two (2) posts, at least one (1) of

which will use the phrase “antioxidant explosion.” The Juicee is also invited to misuse the words “Namaste” and “Ayurvedic” in one or both posts. Juice Your Own Adventure reserves the right to repost this content using the hashtag #vitamaz-ing, as well as making a reference to “day one” of the Juicee’s “transformation.”

4. EXTRAS

In the event that the Juicee purchases a “booster shot,” he/she promises to:

(a) Bring up “spirulina” in at least three (3) unrelated conversations in the course of the day. (For additional instructions regarding pressed green powders, see Matcha Addendum, p. 5.)

(b) Showily take the stairs at work, crediting the power of raw ginger out loud, to no one in particular.

(c) Ask employer to rescind all remaining sick days, citing an “immuno boost” from turmeric.

(d) Spend too long describing the texture of cold-pressed olive oil hitting the back of the throat to a largely disgusted significant other.

5. CONSIDERATION OF A CLEANSE

The Juicee will immediately begin researching multi-day cleanses, e-mailing links to various options to uninterested friends with the subject line “Should we?” The Juicee will consider the purchase of a six-hundred-dollar blender. The Juicee will map out a week’s worth of meals consisting only of liquids derived from beets, tubers, and curd-based proteins. (Note: Actual participation in a cleanse not necessary or recommended.)

6. FITNESS

Juice Your Own Adventure and the Juicee mutually agree that the Juicee does not have to go to the gym today, or maybe ever. From a legal standpoint, drinking a green juice is the same thing as doing between six and twelve hours of high-impact cardio.

7. SUSPICIOUS-LOOKING SAMPLE CLAUSE

In the event that the Juicee is offered a sample of a “rare-root blend” that is “basically exactly like coffee,” Juice Your Own Adventure acknowledges the Juicee’s right to get the hell out of there—that is a trap. ♦

POWER TO THE PEOPLE

Why the rise of green energy makes utility companies nervous.

BY BILL MCKIBBEN



Mark and Sara Borkowski live with their two young daughters in a century-old, fifteen-hundred-square-foot house in Rutland, Vermont. Mark drives a school bus, and Sara works as a special-ed teacher; the cost of heating and cooling their house through the year consumes a large fraction of their combined income. Last summer, however, persuaded by Green Mountain Power, the main electric utility in Vermont, the Borkowskis decided to give their home an energy makeover. In the course of several days, coordinated teams of contractors stuffed the house with new insulation, put in a heat pump for the hot water, and installed two air-source heat

pumps to warm the home. They also switched all the light bulbs to L.E.D.s and put a small solar array on the slate roof of the garage.

The Borkowskis paid for the improvements, but the utility financed the charges through their electric bill, which fell the very first month. Before the makeover, from October of 2013 to January of 2014, the Borkowskis used thirty-four hundred and eleven kilowatt-hours of electricity and three hundred and twenty-five gallons of fuel oil. From October of 2014 to January of 2015, they used twenty-eight hundred and fifty-six kilowatt-hours of electricity and no oil at all. President Obama has announced that by

2025 he wants the United States to reduce its total carbon footprint by up to twenty-eight per cent of 2005 levels. The Borkowskis reduced the footprint of their house by eighty-eight per cent in a matter of days, and at no net cost.

I've travelled the world writing about and organizing against climate change, but, standing in the Borkowskis' kitchen and looking at their electric bill, I felt a fairly rare emotion: hope. The numbers reveal a sudden new truth—that innovative, energy-saving and energy-producing technology is now cheap enough for everyday use. The Borkowskis' house is not an Aspen earth shelter made of adobe and old tires, built by a former software executive who converted to planetary consciousness at Burning Man. It's an utterly plain house, with Frozen bedspreads and One Direction posters, inhabited by a working-class family of four, two rabbits, and a parakeet named Oliver. It sits in a less than picturesque neighborhood, in a town made famous in recent years for its heroin problem. Its significance lies in its ordinariness. The federal Energy Secretary, Ernest Moniz, has visited, along with the entire Vermont congressional delegation. If you can make a house like this affordably green, you should be able to do it anywhere.

Most of the technology isn't particularly exotic—these days, you can buy a solar panel or an air-source heat pump at Lowe's. But few people do, because the up-front costs are high and the options can be intimidating. If the makeover was coordinated by someone you trust, however, and financed through your electric bill, the change would be much more palatable. The energy revolution, instead of happening piecemeal, over decades, could take place fast enough to actually help an overheating planet. But all of this would require the utilities—the interface between people and power—to play a crucial role, or, at least, to get out of the way.

An electric utility is an odd beast, neither public nor exactly private. Utilities are often owned by investors, but they're almost always government-regulated, and they are charged with delivering power reliably and at an affordable price. Utilities are monopolies: since it would make no sense to have six sets of power poles and lines, utilities are

Innovative, eco-friendly technology is now cheap enough for everyday use.

granted exclusive rights to a territory. When you buy or rent a house, you automatically become the customer of the local utility, assuming that you want electricity and you don't plan to generate all of it yourself. To keep the nation's utilities honest, they are typically regulated at the state level by a public-service commission that sets rates, evaluates performance, and enforces mandates, such as a requirement that a certain amount of power come from renewable sources.

Whereas most enterprises are about risk, utilities are about safety: safe power supply, safe dividends. No surprises. As a result, the industry "has not attracted the single greatest minds," David Roberts, who has covered energy for various outlets for a decade and is now a reporter for *Vox*, told me. "If you're in a business where the customer is the public-utility commission, and after that your profits are locked in by law, it's the sleepest business sector there is, if you could even call it a business sector. They build power plants, sit back, and the money comes in." The entire realm is protected, he added, by "a huge force field of boringness."

But what has been a virtue, by and large, is now almost certainly a vice. Scientists insist that in order to forestall global warming we need to quickly change the way we power our lives. That's perhaps most easily done by giant companies with big budgets for new technology; Google, Apple, and IKEA have all announced major plans to switch to renewable energy. For average Americans, however, the biggest source of carbon emissions is their home, so the utilities' help is crucial in making the transition. And, even without climate change, utilities face a combination of threat and opportunity from disruptive new technologies.

Consider the Borkowskis' new air-source heat pumps, which use the latent heat in the air (down to about zero degrees) to heat their home and provide hot water. These devices have made it practical for electricity to be used for tasks traditionally performed by oil and gas. Smart thermostats, such as the Nest, allow you to make your home far more energy-efficient—and can even, when connected to the "smart meters" that are now appearing on many houses, permit the utility to turn your demand down for a few seconds in response to fluctu-

ations in the supply of sun and wind. Electric vehicles provide a major new use for electricity and, perhaps soon, the opportunity for huge numbers of idle car batteries to serve as a storage system for reserve power. (Solar and wind power can be a challenge to incorporate into the grid, because they're intermittent—cloudy days happen, the wind fails. Affordable batteries are essential to making renewable energy widely available.)

"Americans spend eight per cent of their disposable income on all forms of energy," David Crane told me. Crane is the C.E.O. of NRG, the country's biggest independent power provider; the company operates more than a hundred energy-generation facilities, selling electricity to utilities that, in turn, sell it to customers. Nobody wants that eight-per-cent figure to rise, Crane said, because when energy prices go up the country tends to trip into recession. But plenty of companies, including Crane's, would like to see a larger slice of that eight per cent. "I'm interested in electric cars, for instance, not just because of the effect on air quality but because I want to take market share away from oil," Crane said. "It's a brutal fight for market share."

Power utilities now face uncertainty of a kind that traditional phone companies faced when cellular technology emerged. A few utilities welcome the challenge; others are resisting it; and the rest are waiting for someone to tell them what to do.

The headquarters of Green Mountain Power are situated in a converted service garage on the outskirts of Burlington. On most days, Mary Powell, the company's C.E.O., can be found at one of the standing desks on the floor next to the customer-service reps. Powell, who is fifty-four, is one of the rare utility executives with an entrepreneurial background. Fresh out of college, she fell into a job at the Reserve Fund, the world's first money-market fund, and became the associate director of operations. Eventually, she quit and moved with her fiancé to Vermont, where she worked in state government, then in banking, and then quit again, to have a daughter and work on growing the canine-apparel business that she had launched a few years earlier. "I was always terrified about my dogs during hunting season," she told

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me. "There was nothing to protect them. So I started making reflective protective outerwear." (You can buy it still—blaze-orange bandanna, vest, and collar for \$66.85.) In 1998, Powell joined Green Mountain Power as the vice-president of human resources. The company was fighting off bankruptcy, after state regulators turned down its request for a large rate increase. Soon, as chief operating officer, Powell helped restructure Green Mountain Power, and, in 2008, she became its C.E.O.

Utilities, unlike, say, canine-apparel companies, gain their customers automatically, based on where a resident lives, and typically take little interest in them. ("You know what a customer is to a utility?" Crane asked me. "A meter.") Powell, by contrast, describes herself as "customer-obsessed." Green Mountain Power regularly surveys its customers, and the main thing Powell has learned, she said, is that Vermonters "wanted us to be as environmentally strong as possible, but they wanted us to do it without us telling them it was going to cost more money. So that became our vision: low carbon, low cost." Powell became fixated on new technologies, everything from electric-vehicle charging stations to utility-scale storage batteries. "If we move in this direction very rapidly, we can, hopefully, keep rates flat forever," she said, and, in fact, G.M.P. cut its electric rates by two per cent last year. She started searching for partners; at least three contractors worked on the Borkowskis' house, and "that collaboration was one of the real innovations. Not approaching customers in a siloed way, with a dozen companies each pitching a piece. It's 'How can we come to you with a package?'"

How all this will translate into revenue isn't entirely clear, not to Green Mountain or to anyone else in the business. But the cash flow available to the utilities gives them plenty of low-cost capital to work with. They can make money by leasing heat pumps and solar panels to customers. The insulators and other contractors will contribute something, because working with Green Mountain reduces the cost of acquiring new customers. And there's money to be saved. Currently, utilities plan their operations around the busiest day of the year, making sure they have the capacity to meet peak demand on the hottest

August afternoon. But as Green Mountain Power modernizes one home after another—so far it's enabled a few dozen fully remodelled "E-homes" and more than a hundred partial makeovers—the utility gains the potential ability to briefly turn down water heaters and air-conditioners during high-usage periods. This "demand management" allows the utility to avoid peak charges from the regional power grid and can save it hundreds of dollars per customer each year.

"You wouldn't notice, because we're turning down the water heater for just a few seconds," Powell said. But getting permission to do that, or even getting customers to believe that you can save them money with a makeover, "requires a different kind of relationship. Can we really build a deep emotional and intellectual relationship with our customers?"

There are no guarantees, Powell said. But so far she has met every revenue goal set by Green Mountain Power's corporate parent, the Canadian company Gaz Métro. "A challenge in the utility culture is precisely that it's built on guarantees. Innovation happens when there are no guarantees."

Arguably, the era's most disruptive technology is the solar panel. Its price has dropped ninety-nine per cent in the past four decades, and roughly seventy-five per cent in the past six years; it now produces power nearly as cheaply as coal or gas, a condition that energy experts refer to as "grid parity." And because it's a technology, rather than a fuel, the price should continue to fall, as it has for cell phones. Solar power is being adopted most rapidly in places where there is no grid—it's cheaper and quicker to stick panels on the roofs of huts in villages than to build a centralized power station and run poles and wires. In Bangladesh, crews install sixty thousand solar arrays a month. Even in the U.S., where almost everyone has been connected to the grid for decades, solar prices have fallen to the point where, with the help of a federal tax credit, an enterprising company can make money installing solar panels.

One morning in March, I stood on the roof of a suburban ranch in Surprise, a suburb of Phoenix, with Lyndon Rive, the co-founder and C.E.O. of Solar City, the biggest and the fastest-growing in-

staller of rooftop solar in the country. Around us, a five-man crew was laying out a grid of solar panels, following a plan designed by an employee in California who had looked up the roof on Google Earth and measured it. The crew had assembled at the house at seven that morning, and by 5 P.M. the new solar array would be ready to be turned on. The homeowner, like the Borkowskis, was paying nothing up front, and within the first month would see her total electric bill decline. Glancing around the neighborhood, I counted fourteen solar arrays on a hundred or so houses. "It's like e-mail in 1991," Rive said. "When I look out at this street, there's no reason every one of these houses can't have solar in ten years."

Rive is the cousin of the Tesla pioneer Elon Musk, who is the chairman of Solar City's board of directors. Currently, Rive said, the company finishes a solar array somewhere in its eighteen-state service area every three minutes. "That sounds impressive, but it's only two hundred thousand homes so far, out of forty million. My goal is to get it to one home every three seconds. Or maybe we could go faster than that—one every second," he said, snapping his fingers. He pulled an iPhone out of his pocket, called up the calculator app, and punched in some numbers. "At that rate, we could do every house in . . . seventy-six years. No, that's too long—I forgot a division. In a year and a half."

That pace would change the projections for climate change, but it would also require a major government initiative, akin to the one that revitalized industry at the start of the Second World War. Even without it, Solar City has grown by a hundred per cent each year for the past seven years, in part by lowering the soft costs of installation. A job that once took three days can now be done in one, and Rive showed me a training video of a California crew that could do two houses in a day and still have time to surf. By next year, solar will be the fastest-growing new source of energy in the country, approaching half of new capacity. That's still only a fraction of the total capacity, Rive said, "but if you just maintain that, just plot out the line with the retirement of old plants, it's inevitable that it will be over fifty per cent of the total generating

GLASS CEILING

Because she wanted to teach me a lesson
about the natural world, my grandmother raised
Her .22 rifle—we were rabbit hunting, so the shotgun
was at home under her blue chintz pillow—and brought
A quail down on the covey rise. Impossible shot
you may be thinking. True. I said “my grandmother”
Because if I’d said “my mother” you wouldn’t believe
a word of it, since a mother should be leading
A research group, or running a software company,
but a grandmother still can dress in buckskin
And ride a fabulous palomino, doing handstands
on the saddle, executing trick shots blindfold
With a musket, reloading on the fly, while deep
in the underbrush I gather the rabbits to me
And we tremble together in the riptide of her passing.

—*T. R. Hummer*

capacity eventually. And that’s assuming nothing changes.” In fact, he noted, each month brings some new improvement in panels or batteries.

But many utilities see residential solar power as an existential threat. In 2013, an industry trade group called the Edison Electric Institute warned that utilities face what company executives were quick to call “a death spiral.” As customers began to generate more of their own electricity from the solar panels on their roofs, utility revenues would begin to decline, and the remaining customers would have to pay more for the poles and wires that keep the grid alive. That would increase the incentive for the remaining customers to leave.

Since the death-spiral session, utilities around the country have sought to slow the growth of solar: by supporting laws and regulations that would reduce targets for renewable energy; by ending “net metering” laws that force utilities to pay solar customers retail prices for the surplus energy they put back on the grid; by imposing “connection fees” to make up for lost revenues. Much of the campaigning has been spurred by the right-wing American Legislative Exchange Council and funded by various groups linked to the Koch brothers and their fossil-fuel fortune. In 2008, when Solar City first expanded into Arizona, the state had just announced a target for renewable energy, and the utilities were

offering generous rebates to customers who installed solar panels. At first, few homeowners took advantage of the offer—the up-front cost, which ran to twenty thousand dollars or more, was too high. It took the efforts of Solar City, and other competitors using the same no-cost leasing plan, to ignite the market.

“The utilities were always convinced that they could throttle down solar just by tuning down the rebate they were offering,” Rive said. “What caught them off guard was when costs came down to the point where we didn’t need their rebate for solar to make sense. Suddenly, they couldn’t control the outcome anymore. And suddenly you didn’t see any more solar billboards, and suddenly they started taking a hostile approach.”

Arizona’s biggest utility, Arizona Public Service, insists that it is “pro-solar” and notes that it has built its own utility-owned solar arrays in the desert. But it views customers who install rooftop panels as, in essence, cheaters: they get the benefits of the grid—uninterrupted power, even on cloudy days—but, because they provide so much of their own electricity, they aren’t paying their fair share of the total price. In 2013, A.P.S. asked state regulators for permission to charge anyone who wanted to put up a solar panel a fee. “Whether or not you’re producing enough electricity to power your house, you’re still connected to the grid,” Jeff Guldner, the company’s senior

vice-president for public policy, said. “These costs get recovered from somebody, and that somebody is customers who don’t have solar.”

The argument makes a certain intuitive sense, even if utilities like Green Mountain Power, and a fair amount of academic research, suggest that solar customers save utilities as much money as they cost them, by shaving peak demand and by moving power generation closer to clients, which reduces the electricity lost on power lines. The Arizona Corporation Commission agreed with A.P.S. and allowed the utility to charge an average of about five dollars a month, a tenth of the fifty-dollar fee it had requested. Solar City decided not to appeal the ruling. The savings the company was offering many customers still exceeded the new charge, and business continued to grow.

But A.P.S. went on the offensive. In the fall of 2014, as members of the Arizona Corporation Commission, which regulates many of the state’s utilities, began running for election, the company contributed to the campaigns of sympathetic candidates, although it declined to say whom it has supported. (The utility has said only that it “periodically contributes to candidates, causes and organizations that support economic growth, sound energy policy, and other issues important to our company and our customers.”) A.P.S. is even widely suspected of helping to fund the campaign of a candidate for Arizona Secretary of State, because his father was a key vote on the Corporation Commission.

I listened to stories like this for the better part of an afternoon, sitting in a Scottsdale law office with Court Rich and Jason Rose, two self-described “strongly conservative” political operatives who had gone to work for a coalition of companies, including Solar City, to help elect solar advocates to the Corporation Commission’s board of directors. They were mercenary, but they also seemed genuinely outraged. “A.P.S. is a quasi-governmental agency, and they’re using ratepayer money to influence elections?” Rich said. “All of a sudden, we started seeing anti-solar commercials all over the TV. I mean, the ads were comparing solar customers to people stealing from children.” (A.P.S. says that its political contributions were paid for by employee

contributions, not by ratepayer revenue.)

The solar advocates didn't prevail in the election. "In politics, there's a direct correlation between spend and win," Rose said. "And our side was outspent considerably." But the utilities' argument for self-preservation may have reached its limit. Rich and Rose ran a campaign that leaned heavily on standard conservative tropes of self-reliance and freedom.

"Solar should be our issue," Rose said. "Obamacare is bad because it diminishes health-care choice. Public education is bad because it diminishes school choice. You'd think it would apply as well to energy." They helped form a group called Tell Utilities Solar Won't Be Killed, or TUSK—"from the Republican-elephant thing," Rose said. "We have a lot of Tusk and Trunk dinners in the G.O.P." For its chair, they recruited Barry Goldwater, Jr., the son of the original Arizona Republican idol.

Indeed, an odd coalition of environmentalists and conservatives has sprung up around the country to defend solar power. In Georgia, a Tea Party activist named Debbie Dooley and the Sierra Club fought successfully to allow the leasing of rooftop solar panels in the state. Their joint project, the Green Tea Coalition, has spread to Florida, which has some of the nation's most restrictive solar laws. They are working to collect seven hundred thousand signatures by next February, enough to put a measure on the ballot that would amend the state's constitution to allow residents with solar panels to sell electricity back to the grid, as is done in many other states.

But in December Arizona's second-largest utility, the Salt River Project, imposed charges of some fifty dollars a month on the average new solar installation. S.R.P. also insists that it is "pro-solar," but the new charges effectively make it economically difficult for homeowners in the company's service district—in the sunniest state in the country, and in a city that roots for the Phoenix Suns—to install solar panels. Rooftop installations, booming six months ago, have all but halted, and Solar City is transferring large numbers of workers to other districts, as well as suing the utility to have the new charges overturned. Citing the lawsuit, S.R.P. refused requests for an interview, issuing a statement that says, in part, "S.R.P. is confident that its new price

plan will be determined to be appropriate and is confident that it will prevail in all such challenges to it."

Most utilities are neither as innovative as Vermont's nor as scared as Arizona's; most are simply waiting for guidance.

"There are no thirty-year-old C.E.O.s of electric utilities, no Zuckerbergs," David Crane, the NRG chief, told me. "You have to pay your dues, come up through the ranks. You become C.E.O. when you have five years, max, left. Some of them are just not worrying about ten, fifteen years in the future." A member of the executive committee at a major mid-Atlantic utility said, "We don't want to be Kodak, because we can see digital imaging on the horizon. But the regulators are damned slow in figuring out which way we should move. There are eleven hundred utilities in this country, and they're regulated at the state level, so change is going to be very dispersed."

On one of the first hot days of May, I joined Richard Kauffman, the chairman of energy and finance for New York State, and the state's "energy czar," as he and several aides piled into a stuffy L train at Fourteenth Street. In 2013, a few months after Hurricane Sandy left many New Yorkers powerless for days, Governor Andrew Cuomo accused utilities of being "the equivalent of vinyl records in the age of the iPod" and appointed Kauffman to prod them into action. Kauffman soon announced a program of incentives that would eventually be called REV—Re-



forming the Energy Vision. Around the country, other regulators are watching to see how the initiative fares.

Forty-five minutes after boarding the subway, we got off at East 105th Street, in the heart of warehouse Brooklyn, on the edge of Canarsie. We walked half a mile to look at a particular warehouse belonging to a fish wholesaler. Con Ed, faced with growing electrical demand in the borough, had planned to build a billion-dollar substation on the site. But,

in the first real test of the REV plan, the utility will instead supply some of the additional power by encouraging customers to install solar panels and cutting-edge storage batteries. It will also pay customers to limit their usage during peak hours, thereby reducing over-all demand. The effort will cost Con Ed many millions of dollars less than building a new substation, which would seem to make the decision an obvious one.

But, in the odd world of regulated utilities, a company like Con Ed traditionally makes money by building more stuff: put in a billion-dollar substation and you can "rate base" it, making customers pay the cost, plus a ten-per-cent markup, for decades. That arrangement worked well when society needed utilities to build the electrical system, to serve everyone, and when the cheapest technical solution involved big plants "pushing electrons in one direction," Kauffman said. But today "the system is not just energy-inefficient; it's capital-inefficient." At any given moment, New York's utilities are using only about fifty-five per cent of their system capacity. "No other industry uses capital like that anymore," Kauffman said. The regulations are perverse: new software that can reduce electrical demand must be expensed in the current year, while a new wooden pole can generate that ten-per-cent markup for the utility in the course of its fifty-year life span. A pole makes money—hence, poles.

In the next decade, if New York's power industry stumbles along on its current course it will spend about thirty billion dollars on more substations, and on other similarly outdated technology. Electricity costs will continue to rise, and New York's are already among the highest in the country. "That would lead more people to defect from the grid," Kauffman said. "Maybe it's not the death spiral, but it becomes a zombie industry. And, as rates go up, employers would say it's too costly to do business in New York and they'd leave."

Through REV, Kauffman is trying to change the rules so that the utilities can both shift direction and make money. Persuading Con Ed to forgo the substation meant figuring out how to pay them "performance incentives" to instead install the cheaper solar power and storage batteries. In the months to come, New Yorkers should begin to see other examples. "Maybe some appliance company

will say to a consumer, 'We'll give you all new appliances for free, and you'll have the same electric bill less five per cent,'" Kauffman said. Your fridge would come with a chip that allowed it to be cycled off for a moment when demand was peaking, and, as the middleman in the transaction, the utility could take a cut. "The same thing with home entertainment—each new generation of flat-screen TVs uses a lot less power."

Kauffman has all sorts of plans, from a "green bank"—to attract private-sector capital to finance extensive energy-saving retrofits—to new rules that would pressure utilities to play nicely with outside partners like Solar City. "It's kind of a Hannah Arendt thing," he said. "There's not a lot of intentional evil in utilities. But we've created a golden cage for them, protected them from enormous trends." We were on the subway again, and as it clattered back toward Manhattan Kauffman had to shout to be heard: "Our aim is to create a policy environment that is not standing against the forces of history but is in line with them."

Technological change will fundamentally transform the power industry. The question is whether that transformation can happen fast enough to matter, either for the survival of the utilities or, more important, for the preservation of the climate. In the past, energy transformations—wood to coal, coal to oil—have taken fifty years or more to unfold as infrastructure was slowly replaced. New York has a home-energy-audit program, whereby a team will come to your home, determine how much insulation it needs, and identify other ways of boosting your energy efficiency, much the way that Green Mountain Power assessed the Borkowskis' house. "But at current rates of penetration it will take us centuries to do the whole state," Kauffman said.

This time, though, technological change may be coming so rapidly that a quick adaptation is possible. The week that I was in Canarsie with Kauffman, Mary Powell flew to California to attend Elon Musk's announcement of his new home battery, the Powerwall. Green Mountain Power was the only utility in the country that was ready to sell the new battery on the first day that it became available. And Powell was excited by its low price: three thousand dollars, far below what analysts

had predicted, and low enough that her company could immediately begin installing it for customers, especially those who wanted backup electricity in case a snow-storm disabled the grid.

A week after the battery launch, Musk described demand for the batteries as "just nutty" and "off the hook." His company had already sold all the batteries it could make through the middle of next year and was discussing expanding its giant new factory, in Nevada, even before construction was completed. The day after Tesla's launch, Solar City announced that, beginning in 2016, it will routinely package Musk's new batteries with its panels in some markets. If utilities won't relent and embrace innovation, homes and businesses will soon be able to circumvent them altogether. The threat is real enough that it might actually soften the attitude of even recalcitrant utility executives.

Meanwhile, Green Mountain Power is almost ready to flip the switch at its biggest solar farm, built on top of Rutland's old dump. In July, when the site flickers on, the city will be the most solarized in northern New England. But the less obvious changes count even more. Dave and Karen Correll live across town from the Borkowskis, in a well-kept Colonial Cape that was another of the original batch of "E-home" renovations. First, contractors re-insulated the basement and the attic. Then came the air-source heat pump, which the Corrells lease from Green Mountain Power for forty-seven dollars a month. Their oil bill fell sixty-seven per cent during the course of Vermont's long, cold winter of 2015. "I can't wait to see what comes out next," Karen told me. "Our furnace is about at the end of its life, and I can't wait to replace it."

Neither the Corrells nor the Borkowskis changed their homes out of concern for global warming. ("If it's not on the Disney Channel, I don't hear about it," Sara Borkowski said.) But that's the point: a bold reworking of energy systems, long necessary and expensive, is now necessary and much more affordable. That could make for a very different world. ♦

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THE DEMOLITION MAN

Matteo Renzi is on a mission to remake Italy.

BY JANE KRAMER

Early this year, Matteo Renzi invited Angela Merkel to Florence for a tête-à-tête at the Romanesque guild-priory known since the Renaissance as the Palazzo Vecchio and now its city hall. Renzi comes from Florence and, like most Florentines, he is devoted to the city, which in his case elected him mayor in 2009, when he was thirty-four, and nurtured the native Machiavellian wiles that five years later brought him to Rome, at thirty-nine, as the youngest Prime Minister since Italy became Italy, in 1861. In Rome, the art of politics could be described as nets and tridents. Not Renzi's style. In Florence, where the Renaissance charm of the city and the Renaissance stealth of its population still hold sway, Renzi is a master of both, so it isn't surprising that late last year, when Merkel confessed that she'd visited Florence only once, he asked her to come again, this time as his guest. The papers called the invitation the Prime Minister's charm offensive. Renzi, who had hoped for Merkel's blessing on his requests to the European Commission for the time and financial flexibility to rescue the beleaguered economy he inherited, put it this way: "Dostoyevsky wrote that beauty will save the world. Let's see if it can save Europe, too." (Not precisely. It was part of an insolent question posed to the eponymous hero of "The Idiot.")

Renzi and Merkel are the European Union's odd couple. Like Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Antonin Scalia, they get along. They enjoy each other's company, and, if their unlikely friendship includes a large measure of amusement and incredulity, they are well matched when it comes to the steel behind the strategic courtesies that each deploys. Merkel, unflappable and seemingly untouchable after ten years as Chancellor of the Continent's biggest economic power, is Europe's reigning austerity hawk, and pretty much calls the shots in Brussels. Renzi,

who at the time of his invitation was entering his eleventh month in office, was still known abroad mainly for his youth, for the jeans and sneakers he wears to meetings, and for the barbed tweets with which he documents his uphill battle to solve Italy's social woes and persistent fiscal crises. He had produced an ambitious package of reforms, and kept the budget deficit at a safe, if hovering, three per cent of the country's G.D.P. (Any E.U. member with a higher deficit risks sanctions from Brussels.) Now he needed to finance the kind of infrastructural, technological, and economic innovations that would create new jobs and generate enough investment and enthusiasm to put Italy, the third-largest economy in the euro zone, back into what he calls the "European conversation." By January, he was well on the way to success: Jean-Claude Juncker, the president of the European Commission, had announced a plan to release some three hundred billion euros to the zone's qualifying states for what was prudently called investment with scrutiny; and Mario Draghi, the president of the European Central Bank (and the former governor of the Bank of Italy), had signed off on another plan, designed to kick-start recovery for those states, with a stimulus package of a trillion euros. Merkel, with a seemingly balanced budget, was resigned, but she did not approve.

Renzi, with his press secretary and diplomatic adviser in tow, pulled up at the gate of a military terminal on the edge of Ciampino, Rome's city airport, to fly to Florence. He was running a couple of hours late, and when I joined him on the small government plane idling on the runway he was still dressed in his work uniform of jeans and a rumpled white shirt, open at the neck. We talked through the flight, or, rather, Renzi talked. He was excited about Merkel's visit, and kept interrupting himself to come back to it. He has what could be called a peri-

patetic mind and, like any good performer, he uses it to keep you on the edge of your seat, not asking inconvenient questions, and also, perhaps, to impress himself when he's about to confront an obstacle in his path. The obstacle that night was Merkel, and the goal, he told me, was "changing the narrative of Europe through art." Renzi tries out aphorisms the way other men do ties. The last time we had talked, it was "changing the story of Europe through art."

Renzi was still practicing—"The future of Europe is not tomorrow, it is today!"—as the plane began its descent into Florence's airport. He looked at his watch, jumped up, and disappeared into the pilot's bathroom to change into a suit and comb his hair. We got to the Palazzo Vecchio just in time for him to race up four hundred and sixteen ceremonial steps, check out the crowd of *notabile* waiting inside, and race back down to collect the Chancellor when she stepped, smiling, out of a modest consular car, dressed in black trousers and, under a plain black coat, a pretty, off-the-rack yellow jacket—as if to suggest that hers was the beauty of fiscal thrift.

Merkel seemed pleased, if somewhat bemused, by the red-carpet and costumed-honor-guard welcome she received. Renzi escorted her up to the palazzo and introduced her to the assembled locals, and, after a decent Instagram interval, they vanished into a private room for their conversation on the subject of saving Europe. An hour later, they emerged and were joined by a small group of advisers, representing his and her side of the spending divide—after which their talk morphed into a Tuscan feast, served at a table set in solitary splendor in the middle of a vast and otherwise empty hall. At ten, everyone walked next door, to the Uffizi, for an after-hours tour. Renzi, as proud as a new father, expounded on the beauty of Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus." Merkel stole back



Matteo Renzi is the youngest Prime Minister in his country's history. "This year, I will change Italy or change jobs," he says.

into the gallery alone, minutes later, and headed for the early Leonardo “Annunciation.” The evening ended at eleven, with Merkel leaving for her hotel and Renzi and a few friends disappearing down a small street for an espresso at his favorite Florence hangout. He had officiated at the owner’s wedding, to her barista, back in the days when he would bike to city hall and people greeted him on the street with a “*Ciao, sindaco!*”

The next morning, there was a press conference in the Michelangelo gallery of the Academy of Florence, and the beauty on offer was “David,” slingshot at hand—fourteen ravishing feet of marble ready to take on Goliath. Merkel congratulated Renzi on his promise to “turbo-charge” his reforms. She joked that he brought her “progress reports” whenever they met, and said she had “no doubt that what Matteo proposes will be implemented”—all the while reminding him that, from Germany’s point of view, it was up to entrepreneurs, not states, to promote jobs. Renzi, for his part, said that while he and the Chancellor “may not always have the same opinions” on the virtue of frugality over growth, “the symbols of compromise are important”—by which he meant that Germany risked isolating itself in Europe by its unbending fiscal rigor. In the end, it was a draw and a gracious goodbye. It has to be said that Merkel flew home to Berlin looking uncommonly reassured that Italy wasn’t Greece.

Italians who admire Matteo Renzi call him “our best hope.” More skeptical Italians say, “Well, maybe our only hope.” The Western press hedges its bets with “brash” but “confident.” And his enemies use the term *il rottamatore*, the demolition man. Renzi agrees with his enemies. “I’m the scrapper,” he told me. “I’m cleaning up the swamp.” He meant the waste, the deadly bureaucracy, the notoriously padded ranks of Italy’s public administration, the unemployment now at forty per cent among the country’s youth, the outrageously slow pace of the justice system, the culture of cronyism, political perks and payoffs, tax evasion, casual everyday criminality, and open cheating—not to mention the various mafias, from the Cosa Nostra to the Camorra and the Ndrangheta, that still hold much of the economy of the South

(and not a little of the North) in thrall. “We love Italy, I think you love Italy, everybody loves Italy,” Renzi had told the Council on Foreign Relations one morning last September, during a trip to New York for the opening of the United Nations session. “This is the risk for my country.” The risk has been that, for Italians, loving Italy is a way of saying, We’re used to the swamp we have, we know our way around in it—why bet on a future that might be worse?



“They love their past, their present, but they need a vision and an explanation of their future—in the possibility of a future,” Renzi told me that night, flopping onto a couch in the living room of his hotel suite. It was nearly ten hours since I’d heard him speak at the C.F.R., and he was exhausted from a day of interviews and speeches but waiting up for a call from the French President. “The mentality of Italy has to change, because reforms aren’t possible without everybody’s participation. We’re a young team—we want to invest in the new generation—but we’re not *simply* a young team. Youth is the man of whatever age who risks believing in the possibility of change.”

Renzi had moved into the Palazzo Chigi, the Prime Minister’s official residence, with a to-do list. “A reform a month,” he promised. He was going to radically change the labor market in Italy, with a Jobs Act that would offer financial protection for new, young workers while, at the same time, giving employers the right (a first for Italy) to lay off any workers in cases of economic pressure, with no obligation to rehire them; reduce the maddening ineptness of public administration; reform the justice system to shorten the process for civil cases; remake a parliament swollen to more than a thousand extravagantly paid members; generate foreign investment, then running at half the E.U. average; confront corruption with “values”; rewrite

the election laws to produce a majority-rules system; and, of course, wrest “the story of Europe” from Angela Merkel. In January last year, a month before he became Prime Minister—with the hardcore labor wing of his center-left Democratic Party already stonewalling but with much of Italy distracted by his infectious litany of transformation—he struck a deal with Silvio Berlusconi that would help get his reforms passed.

Berlusconi was Italy’s Prime Minister three times in the seventeen years between 1994 and 2011. He spent nine of those years in office—thanks in large part to Forza Italia, the party he founded, and funded with his own money, in order to protect a financial empire that had made him Italy’s richest man. (His fortune now stands at \$7.6 billion.) As Prime Minister, he was also its most legally unaccountable man. He was not solely responsible for the “swamp,” but given that, in office, he controlled ninety per cent of the country’s media—his own private media monopoly, Mediaset, and RAI, the state radio and television networks—he could celebrate his insouciant immunity and, more to the point, make it glamorous and entertaining. That running joke came to a halt in 2011, when Italy’s sovereign debt rose to \$2.6 trillion and Berlusconi, losing a vote of confidence in parliament, had to resign from office. Two years later, after dozens of criminal investigations, he was banned from politics when a tax-fraud case, dating from the year of his resignation, became the first of his lower-court convictions to be whisked through the appeals process, and upheld, before the statute of limitations could kick in. (Given the state of Italy’s justice system, two years counted as overnight.)

When Renzi took over the government, Berlusconi was about to start serving a suspended sentence that obliged him to devote four hours a week to community service, tending Alzheimer’s patients at a nursing home near Milan. Many of his parliamentary deputies had defected by then and formed their own party, the New Center Right—they vote in a coalition with Renzi’s party now, and one of them, Angelino Alfano, is his interior minister. But the rest of Forza Italia remained a considerable presence in both houses of parliament, ready to do Berlusconi’s bidding.

Renzi's deal with Berlusconi was negotiated at Democratic Party headquarters, on the Largo del Nazareno, with a Democratic deputy named Lorenzo Guerini representing Renzi and Gianni Letta, Berlusconi's longtime *éminence grise*, representing the other side. It quickly became known as the Nazarene Pact, and though it was never published or even, presumably, written down, no one denied what was in it. Berlusconi pledged Forza Italia's support for two of Renzi's key reforms. One involved transforming the country's chaotic version of a proportional electoral process into what Roberto d'Alimonte, a well-regarded political scientist who had helped draft the reform for Renzi, called a simple "majority-assuring system": the party whose list of candidates won at least forty per cent of the vote would get fifty-four per cent of the seats in parliament, and could form a government of its own; if no party won forty per cent, the two lists with the most votes would compete in a runoff, and the winner would get the government. Renzi put it this way when we last talked: "In Germany, Angela Merkel was forced to have a grand-coalition government. I joke with Angela that, with my electoral law, she could be Chancellor free and clear."

The second reform involved amending Italy's postwar constitution, a document desperately, if understandably, democratic in its intended checks and balances. No new law could be enacted unless or until both the Camera (the chamber of deputies) and the Senate agreed to the same document, with exactly the same wording—one reason that Italy has been left endlessly recycling old Prime Ministers through a series of unstable new alliances. (Renzi's is the sixty-third government in sixty-nine years.) Renzi's idea was to abolish the Senate in its present role, transforming it, greatly reduced in size, into an assembly in some ways similar to the German Bundesrat. It would deal mainly with regional affairs, play no part in the creation (or the collapse) of the country's governments, and leave the important national legislation in the Camera's hands.

In return, Berlusconi expected a say in the selection of the country's next President. The Italian Presidency is a largely ceremonial post, but in times of crisis the President has critically import-

ant powers. He (there has never been a she) has the right to dissolve parliament and call for immediate elections or, alternately, to appoint a new Prime Minister to form a government and serve until the current five-year election cycle ends—which, in fact, is how Renzi got the job. The President also has the right to grant pardons and commute sentences, which in Berlusconi's case would possibly lift his ban, at least until the next conviction. (This spring, Berlusconi went on trial again, in Naples, charged with bribery.) Given that in January of 2014 the President, Giorgio Napolitano, was eighty-eight and longing to retire, and that Berlusconi, a surgically youthful seventy-seven, was longing for a comeback, Renzi got his pact.

In one sense, the pact could be seen as an American-style crossing of the aisle, but it amounted to revolution in a country where ideology had long taken precedence over accommodation. Renzi faced the inevitable backlash from the left of his party with a shrug and a few choice words, knowing, perhaps, that in the matter of craftiness he was miles ahead of the man whom no politician in Italy had ever managed to outfox before. ("Whom *should* I have talked to? Dudù?" he demanded. Dudù is a miniature poodle owned by Berlusconi's girlfriend.)

While the left cried betrayal and Berlusconi cheerfully waited for absolution, Renzi quietly pushed the Presidential candidacy of a Constitutional Court justice named Sergio Mattarella, who, at seventy-four, had spent his life battling Italy's criminal classes and their

political allies, Berlusconi among them. (Mattarella's older brother, a reform governor of Sicily, was gunned down by the Sicilian Mob in 1980, at the age of forty-five.) When it was all over, the Democrats' recalcitrant leftists fell in line behind Mattarella, and then it was Berlusconi who cried betrayal. Mattarella became President in January this year. The Nazarene Pact is a thing of the past, but so, it appears, is Berlusconi.

Renzi isn't much of a reader. It's unlikely that he keeps "The Prince" on his night table, but somewhere along the way to the Chigi Palace he learned one lesson from the wiliest Florentine of them all: a leader takes no prisoners where his ambition to rule wisely is at stake. There is no doubt that Renzi wants to save Italy from itself, or that he considers himself the only person who can do that. At home, he goes on the attack. "Plots, secrets, fake scoops, bollocks, and backward thinking: it takes just one night of watching television to understand Italy's talk-show crisis" was one of his tweets at the end of January. A month later, he announced a plan to transform the compromised state media networks into an independent public corporation chartered on the order of the BBC. He reserves his homilies for inspirational speeches and the foreign press.

"I come from two experiences," he told me one afternoon in Rome. One involved the four years he spent refereeing amateur soccer games, in Florence as a young man, and having to think on his feet and "to decide in seconds: this



Kanin

"We gave cocaine to some and not to others, and now there's a full-on drug war."



"The ten paces were too much of a hassle."

is the foul, this is the red card." The other involved his fifteen years as a Boy Scout, developing a passion for public service—"for the *res publica*" is how he put it. You would have to add Catholicism to that short, formative list. In Italy, the Boy Scouts are not just tents and trails. They are under the aegis of the Church.

Renzi was born into a devout Catholic family. His father, Tiziano, is a Florence businessman who for years was a Christian Democratic assemblyman, and Matteo himself is a churchgoing Catholic, married to a like-minded schoolteacher and former Girl Scout whose brother is a priest. Roberto Cociancich, a Milan lawyer and Democratic Party senator, met Renzi when he signed up for a Boy Scout leadership-training camp that Cociancich was running in Tuscany. "Matteo was twenty then," he told me. "There were forty people training in the camp, but after a couple of days I knew that this young man was somebody special. He was brilliant, capable—so capable that I asked him to join my training team. In the Scouts, we put a lot of emphasis on becoming good citizens. Our mission is to produce leaders, and we see the political life as an instrument for this. So I urged him to consider that life. In 2013, he called me and said, 'Twenty years ago, you told me to choose a po-

litical life. Now it's your turn'—so I ran for the Senate, and here I am."

Renzi likes to quote his mother—an obligatory male ritual in Italy. He says that she used to tell him stories about Robert Kennedy "fighting for justice in the sixties, in America," and that she always ended those stories with the words "Matteo, fight!" His communal spirit as a young leader seems to have done little to dampen that imperative. His easy camaraderie notwithstanding, he grew up with an appetite for the fray and a mean competitive streak. At nineteen, he was a contestant on Italy's version of "Wheel of Fortune." He was a little chubby then, and his getup was provincial (brown suit, big wide-knotted tie), but he won three weeks in a row before being beaten, and took home some thirty thousand euros in prize money. At twenty-seven, he left the small party where he had been provincial secretary to become the local leader of the Daisy, a center-left coalition that in 2007 merged into the fractious ranks of the newly created Democratic Party. At twenty-nine, he was elected president of Florence's provincial council. Five years later, he decided to run for mayor. When he won the Democrats' nomination and then the election, he softened the blow to a friend named Dario Nardella, who had apparently

hoped to be mayor himself, by appointing him as his deputy mayor and obvious successor. "Matteo is committed and tough, but it's to lead, not to control," Cociancich said. Actually, it's both.

Renzi was the third Prime Minister appointed by Giorgio Napolitano in the years since Berlusconi left office, in 2011. The others were "technocrats," a euphemism for "experts in another life." The well-known economist and former European Commissioner Mario Monti was brought in first, to tackle the mounting debt crisis that Berlusconi had failed to manage. Two years later, Monti made the mistake of running in the national elections—with no political base beyond Civic Choice, the small party he had patched together to support him—and was trounced. Enrico Letta came next. He lasted ten months before Napolitano replaced him. Letta was directing a think tank when we first met, in 2007. Eight years later, he described his months at the Chigi to me this way: "I wasn't a 'communicator.' I didn't run an administration of a hundred-and-forty-character bites." Renzi's public assault on Letta began with a condescending tweet: "Stay calm! Nobody wants your job." The message was clear. The next day, Letta drove to the Quirinale to offer his resignation to Napolitano. By evening, Renzi was Prime Minister.

Renzi's plan then was to move to general elections quickly. He wanted fresh and appealing faces in his cabinet, to signal the end of those old pols, laundered and recycled through most of the governments that preceded his. Predictably, he opted for youth and women—the obvious appealing things. (Renzi told me that the average age of his cabinet was forty-seven; eight of the sixteen ministers he appointed were women.) It worked. A few months later, riding the wave of Renzi's popularity, the Democratic Party won forty-one per cent of the vote in Italy's European parliamentary election. It was a spectacular victory for Renzi—better than any Italian party had done in any election since 1946, and certainly enough of a mandate to free him from the risks of calling general elections at home. He bought the time to negotiate his reforms.

"Renzi is a pure politician, one of the

toughest I've seen in years," Franco Bernabe, the chairman of the Italian financial-advisory boutique FB Group and a former head of ENI, the state energy company, and Telecom Italia, told me. "He picks up very quickly on the essence of power. He's not very deep intellectually, but he has a fantastic ability to take up and absorb good ideas. He had only local experience when he came to Rome, but he already had a European agenda, he understood completely the problems of Italy, and he could get that message across. Monti had failed spectacularly at that, and Letta even worse. I, of course, welcomed a man with the right vision and understanding, and if he didn't listen to every old pol, so what? He was anxious to get rid of that older generation. They would happily have got rid of him."

In Florence, Renzi had been immensely popular as mayor. He halved the size of an overstuffed city council, installed free Wi-Fi centers across the town, and increased the budget for social services and preschools. He found patrons for art projects and exhibits like "Sculpture in the Age of Donatello," which spent this spring at the Museum of Biblical Art, in New York. He also closed Florence's Renaissance city center to traffic. The tour buses disappeared. It was a change that tapped into the pride that Florentines take in their history. It also meant that the center could be reclaimed, or at least shared, by the natives. (Renzi, who revered Steve Jobs, told me that Jobs liked to compare the two great Renaissances: Florence and Apple.)

But what really made Renzi's national reputation were the Leopolda, annual public conclaves that he inaugurated a year after his election, on the advice of his deputy mayor for culture, in a converted nineteenth-century railway station of the same name. The Leopolda were all-day happenings on the order of a political human be-in. Thousands of people came to talk and listen. The only rule was that everyone had to say whatever he or she wanted to say in five minutes or less.

Edoardo Nesi, a Tuscan writer and filmmaker who has been a deputy in the Camera for the past two and a half years, got to know Renzi in Florence, after Renzi talked about his book "Story of My People" at the first Leopolda. The

book was a memoir, about the small family fabric factory that Nesi ran briefly and had to sell when competition from China began forcing Tuscany's old fabric-makers out of business; it got a lot of attention in Italy because of its evocation of people fighting for dying local traditions in a global world. Nesi called Renzi to thank him. "Matteo said, 'Come to the next Leopolda and talk,'" Nesi told me. "So I did. Four or five thousand people were there that day, listening and talking, and the idea of something like that, something political, starting from the people—it confirmed my feeling that Matteo was necessary for Italy. It was his idea that Italy had to change, that Italy had been living for years concentrating on its past without connecting to its future, that Italy was in decadence." I asked Nesi why he'd run for parliament, and he said, "I had this feeling that Italy was up for grabs, this feeling of urgency and fear, so I thought it was good to give a little of my time to public service—and also because this moment, in Italy, this is fantastic material for a writer!"

It's been said that Renzi's "Rome" is the elevator between his office on the first floor of the Palazzo Chigi and his official apartment on the third. His wife, Agnese Landini, remains in Florence, where their three children go to public school, and where Landini teaches Latin and Italian in a classical public high school. Most weekends, Renzi flies home to see them. They are rarely together at



the Chigi. On the few occasions when the family spends a weekend in Rome, Renzi joins them at a seventeenth-century villa in a tranquil, outlying Roman park which for years has served as one of the Prime Minister's official retreats.

"It's fifty minutes on the plane, and I'm home," Renzi told me, talking about his commute to Florence. "And that way I avoid the risks in bringing my family here. In Florence, they can continue a traditional life. A year ago, I didn't have

secret service. I used my bike. I talked quietly to citizens on the street. Now that's over for me, but I want that same freedom for them. This job is an incredible responsibility. But this chair I'm sitting in—it isn't the center of my life, but at this moment I work for my country. I'm focussed on *changing* my country. I feel the emotion of innovation, of the lab." A minute later, he was recommending his "innovation video"—highlights from a whirlwind trip he'd made to Silicon Valley in the fall—which in turn reminded him that "Pope Francis decided to speak to the European Parliament on November 23rd, during my presidency of Europe." (The presidency of the Council of the European Union is a rotating six-month post; Italy gets another turn in fourteen years.) Renzi counts that speech as an endorsement—a reform Pope and a reform Prime Minister in synch in their excoriations of church and state. He is an ardent Francis fan. He said that after the Pope warned Catholics that their "moral responsibility" did not include breeding "like rabbits," the first thing he did was to call a prolifically procreating friend and tell him, "You can stop now!"

Lucia Annunziata, who covered national politics for *Corriere della Sera* and, in 2012, became the editor of the new Huffington Post Italia, says that Renzi's stories are a constructed life, a way to enforce his image as a gentle knight on a noble crusade, with none of the vices that Italians have come to expect in their politicians. In fact, he has very few. He isn't a womanizer. He isn't corrupt, or even, by all reports, interested in money. One of his first appointments was Raffaele Cantone, a Naples magistrate who had heroically pursued the Camorra for twenty years. Renzi created an anti-corruption authority for Cantone—three hundred men and women working together from Rome to dismantle a system so criminally interconnected that Cantone described their job to me as "an unending process." Renzi gave Cantone carte blanche and his office an independent charter. "I am not a friend," Cantone, who barely knew Renzi when he took the job, told me. "I *appreciate* him. At the beginning, he asked me only one thing. He said, 'Raffaele, if someone calls you in my name and asks something,

or asks *for* something, don't do it!"

Renzi's one vice may be his keen interest in controlling what he would call "the narrative" of his entitlement. Annunziata, who admired the Prime Minister at first, now counts herself a Renzi skeptic. "He has that Bill Clinton look," she told me. "The one where he looks deep into your eyes, promising everything, and all of a sudden the look goes over your shoulder to the next person. There was always a mystery to him. He had the sagacity to know that his moment had come. He knew the extent to which Rome was rotten, and he was good at picking up on the old age and bankruptcy of the Democratic Party—that Italy was still all about postwar politics, left and right. He felt accurately the resentment in Italy, the stagnation. So he swooped down." Like a knight? I asked her. "Like the Vandals," she said.

Like any politician, Renzi courts the journalists who praise him and gives wide berth to the ones who don't. But most reporters in Rome will tell you that Renzi has two governments—his official cabinet and house advisers and his Chigi kitchen cabinet of Tuscan strategists, otherwise known as the *giglio magico*, or magic lily, for the flower on Catherine de' Medici's coat of arms—and that access to the latter is blocked. (It was to me.) The one exception seems to have been a reporter from *Il Foglio*, a weekly paper with close ties to Berlusconi, who described the after-hours Chigi as a place in glorious disarray, where the young Tuscans are busy running Italy, barefoot in T-shirts, eating takeout pizza.

There is nothing new about politicians trying out their ideas and tactics on friends whose loyalty is first and foremost to them, and whose discretion is a given. Barack Obama installed his Chicago cronies David Axelrod and Valerie Jarrett in the White House. David Cameron gave pride of place at 10 Downing Street to his plummy Eton crowd. The difference, with Renzi, is that his *giglio magico* remains an open secret, and no one can say for sure whether it is actually "running Italy" with him or simply running errands.

Some of the Tuscans in Renzi's kitchen cabinet are in his government, too—most famously Luca Lotti, a thirty-four-year-old under-secretary of state for publications, otherwise known as the

Chigi's most accomplished fixer. (Lotti, whose wife was Renzi's secretary when he was mayor of Florence, was instrumental in arranging the meetings that produced the Nazarene Pact.) Another is Maria Elena Boschi, who studied law in Florence a few years after Renzi and is now, to mixed reviews, his minister for constitutional reform. And a third is said to be Francesco Bonifazi, a Florence lawyer and Democratic Party deputy who, with Lotti, is hoping to revive the defunct Communist daily *L'Unità* as a center-left "Renziani" newspaper. The others vary, depending on Renzi's enthusiasm and on whom you ask. "In the end, it's the inner circle that counts for Renzi," Franco Bernabe told me. "With the cabinet, 'young' or 'woman' didn't necessarily mean capable. . . . Some ministers performed, some didn't. The difference, with the Chigi group, is that Renzi trusts them"—which is to say, they perform for him.

Last fall, Renzi sent his first foreign minister, Federica Mogherini, to Brussels to become the new European high representative for foreign affairs and security policy, and today she and her replacement at the ministry, Paolo Gentiloni, have the difficult job of garnering European support for the possibility of Italian troops in Libya. ISIS is now a major player in Libya's civil war—which, as Renzi said when he first threatened to intervene, in February, puts terrorists two hours by boat from Italy's shores. During his first year in office, a hundred and seventy thousand refugees from the violence in Africa and the Middle East arrived on southern Italy's islands, most of them plucked from the sea by Italian Navy ships, or from the sinking rubber boats of their Libyan traffickers. The ships were part of a humanitarian patrol-and-rescue mission called Mare Nostrum (Our Sea), which Letta's government initiated in the fall of 2013, and which Renzi had to cancel a year later, under pressure from his coalition and, more significant, from E.U. members who argued that the success of Mare Nostrum's rescue operation was actually encouraging migration: too much, at any rate, for a continent already packed with refugees and migrant workers to handle. The E.U. replaced Mare Nostrum with a much

smaller operation called Triton, and confined it to sea and air patrolling—in other words, to deterrence. Whatever refugees it did rescue were deposited in Italy.

Renzi, in a widely circulated op-ed in the *Times* in April, called Triton "dramatically inadequate." He pleaded with Europe to take on its humanitarian share, pointing out that Triton's budget was a fraction of Mare Nostrum's, and amounted to only forty million euros out of the yearly E.U. budget of a hundred and forty-five billion. Less than a month later, the European Commission proposed a formula involving an emergency refugee-quota system for each of its member states, based on the state's size, solvency, unemployment figures, and pending asylum claims. Its future is uncertain. (Britain, France, and Spain have already refused to participate.) Today, with human trafficking fast becoming one of Libya's only profitable businesses, and refugees still arriving in huge numbers—upward of fifty thousand so far this year, not to mention the more than seventeen hundred and fifty who drowned trying, including eight hundred in a single day—the burden for Italy is undeniable. Last month, the Italian police arrested a Moroccan man who had entered Italy with a boatload of refugees in February and was now wanted for providing "logistical support" to the massacre at a museum in Tunis in March.

At the beginning of this year, Italy's sovereign debt—moneys owed by the state to all public and private lenders—was 2.16 trillion euros. Monti had tried to stem the debt with rigorous "European" measures, and failed. Letta had simply failed. Now it's Renzi's turn. None of his other reforms will mean much unless he can turn around the fiscal and economic crises he inherited. Napolitano is said to have put one condition on appointing him, and that was that Renzi choose a finance minister with international experience and standing. At the time, the most that anyone knew about Renzi's economic views was his belief in what could be called global capitalism as a transformative—which is to say, potentially progressive—force for social and economic change. He was said to be getting economic advice from a Democratic Party deputy named Yoram Gutgeld, a



veteran of twenty-four years with the growth-management giant McKinsey, and trying it out on one of his closest friends in Florence, Marco Carrai—a successful young businessman and investor whom, as mayor, he had installed as president of the Florence Airport. Carrai is not an economist. Among other pursuits, he is developing security technology in Israel, and he shares Renzi's strong support for the country in an increasingly dismissive Europe.

Renzi made his decision quickly. The man he tapped for the ministry of finance and the economy was Pier Carlo Padoan, a sixty-five-year-old veteran of the International Monetary Fund and the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development, where he was the chief economist and deputy secretary-general. He came to the job with no political agenda but with a lot of good will from Europe, and a strong sense of the problems he was about to face.

"My view of what needs to be done is to address a combination of three problems that have been rigid impediments to our growth," Padoan told me. "And we need to do that now. One is boosting growth through tax cuts for both

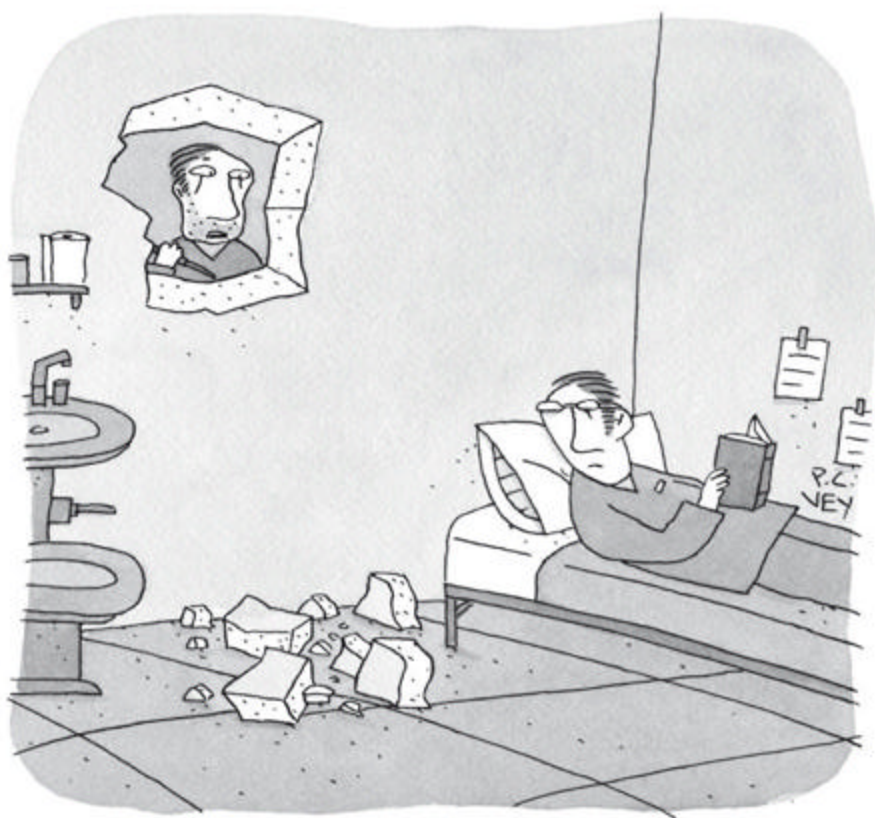
companies and households. Another, of course, is supporting innovation." (Renzi, returning from his "innovation" trip to California, had promised Italy its own Silicon Valley.) "And the third is introducing the kind of structural reforms that could lead to a new European Code—one that specified that countries implementing sound reforms could benefit from an allowance if the investment involved was seen as promoting incentive and growth." He said that the budget law under discussion would "change the logic by which public money is used." And the ongoing tax reforms would not only simplify taxes but "change the taxpayer's relation" to the taxes he has to pay, which is to say that tax evasion—a national pastime that Berlusconi decriminalized in 2002 and Renzi recriminalized this year—has been redefined to include the off-the-books jobs that are said to account for up to twenty per cent of Italy's economy.

Padoan was expected to have a tempering effect on Renzi, but Renzi is a notorious micromanager. "Oops, there's a text from Mr. Renzi, he always texts," Padoan said, a few minutes into our conversation, texting back. Minutes later, he

got a second text. He answered it, and not much later his cell phone rang. He took the call, laughing. "It's Mr. Renzi again," he told me. "It's normal. That's Renzi."

Then, too, Padoan's instincts are incremental: first Italy, then the world. Renzi's are the world. In December, he added Andrea Guerra—the former C.E.O. of Luxottica, the global eyewear company that owns Ray-Ban—to his Chigi team of senior economic advisers. The team is led by a like-minded state secretary for international economic affairs named Marco Simoni, whom Renzi met when Simoni, a young professor at the London School of Economics, came to speak at the first Leopolda. "The paradox is that, in the past, Italy passed plenty of economic reforms, but they were badly conceived and badly executed," Simoni told me. "There was no defense of income, no economic protection. We are definitely free market. But unlike Mrs. Thatcher—she's the example we use in England—we want growth *and* social justice, and the fact is that countries that have externalized more, that have looked to the huge developing markets in India, China, South America, end up with a better, fairer economy at home. Our point? You can't divorce your national and international agenda. It's one single polity now."

Italy's Democratic Party, in its new, "Renziani" incarnation—think Clinton-Blair for the twenty-first century—is a warring clan of former Communists, Socialists, Social Democrats, Christian Democrats, and liberal entrepreneurs, each faction circling the others warily and hoping they will go away. I sat in on the Party's board-of-directors meeting, on the Largo del Nazareno, late last winter. Renzi gave the opening speech. It covered the subjects he wanted to see discussed, from the attacks in Paris to the progress in Brussels, the construction-kickback scandals then surfacing in Milan, the parliamentary chaos that had left one house debating electoral reform and the other public-administration reform, and, finally, the lazy pace of the Party's own discussions about those issues. "This isn't a joke; discussion is not 'optional,'" he said. But the only thing that most of the other speakers wanted to "discuss" was the result of a regional primary election in



"Oh, sorry. I thought this was an exterior wall."

Liguria that Renzi's handpicked reform candidate had won and his opposition on the left—having forced, and lost, a recount—was still protesting. Some twenty board members stood up, one by one, and presented mind-numbing catalogues of their complaints. Renzi listened for three hours, texting and typing notes, and then he looked over the notes he'd made and responded to each complaint in increasingly exasperated detail. But his closing message was succinct: No more Liguria; Liguria is over. Let's practice being united. Stop blocking my electoral reforms, and let the party that can win this—that's us—govern.

"I keep saying, 'Matteo, you have to run, run, run for the solution, because if you run fast the solution to your problem comes,'" Renzi's friend and arguably most colorful supporter, Oscar Farinetti, the paterfamilias of the Eataly food-emporium empire, told me a few days later. "Matteo and I are both so busy, but in the morning, at six, we text. For six months, it's been about the eighty-euro thing." He was talking about an eighty-euro-a-month tax credit that Renzi started giving to low-paid workers last year, hoping to stimulate spending; by all indications, they were saving the money instead. "Matteo asks, 'How about Eataly? Is business growing?' At first, I had to say 'No!' But suddenly, in December, I could say 'Yes!' People started spending, and they haven't stopped. I tell him, 'Matteo, humans aren't perfect. To manage the imperfection, you have to keep at it.'"

When Renzi talks about his enemies, first among equals is always his own left wing. "My opposition on the left is an ideological one," he once told me. "I don't think it's important to discuss *anything* with them anymore." He is far more comfortable with his center-left, center-right coalition, perhaps because, in the end, he likes the idea of "center" best. But his enemies list remains long. There are still Berlusconi loyalists in parliament, though by all reports that loyalty is fizzling now. More seriously disruptive are the comedian Beppe Grillo's Five Star Movement, on the populist left, and Matteo Salvini's new "national" Lega party, on the populist right, both competing for the same anti-Europe, anti-immigrant votes. They keep Renzi busy,

however undaunted he claims to be.

Grillo founded his gadfly party in 2009, and the fans who had flocked to his standup act now flock to his rallies in the Piazza del Popolo. "I'm a performer, and when there's a strategy I know it," he told me. "Renzi says, 'I did this, *we* did that,' and people think he's the last chance for Italy, but, no, he's the last chance for the bankers." It was hard to tell whether Grillo was railing against the notion of a transformative capitalism or about the fact that Renzi, who had begun to unblock the country's electoral system by abolishing state subsidies for political parties, was raising money for his own party from investment bankers and financiers (among them James Pallotta, the American hedge-fund manager and now the president of the soccer team A.S. Roma). Grillo's party, which is mainly a volunteer Internet operation, has little or no money. It also happens to be the second-largest party in the Camera, although its power to do anything besides filibuster is nonexistent. Grillo forbids his deputies to enter into a coalition, and even removes the ones who disagree with him. (In a way, Renzi owes his job to Grillo, who refused to form a governing coalition with the Democrats after the parliamentary elections in 2013, when their party leader was the labor-left politician Pier Luigi Bersani.)

David Allegranti, a young journalist in Rome, told me, "Grillo as a threat? Come on! There are Grillo deputies who believe in mermaids; there are deputies who believe that the jet streams you see in the sky are chemical weapons!" Allegranti, who comes from Florence and has written two books about Renzi, said that the Prime Minister cultivates his image as a man beleaguered by crazies because it makes him seem "more essential" to saving Italy. Maybe. Last year, Grillo made the perhaps inevitable mistake of allying his Five Star Movement with Britain's far-right United Kingdom Independence Party, in an attempt, eventually thwarted, to form a secessionist bloc in the European Parliament. People quickly predicted that he would self-destruct. They were wrong.

Then there is "the other Matteo"—Matteo Salvini—and his "new" Lega. In the days when Lega was the powerful

junior partner in Berlusconi's coalition, it was known as Lega Nord. Its cause was separatism—Italy as a federation of fiscally independent regions—the idea being to free the prosperous North from having to pay the bills of an impoverished and, as Salvini puts it, "culturally different" South. Salvini, who took over Lega Nord in 2013 (a year and a half after its founder, Umberto Bossi, came under investigation for siphoning large amounts of party money to restore his house, an allegation he denied), has a bigger canvas. "I wish all the bad possible for Renzi's reform plan," he told me, on a call from Milan. "As for Angela Merkel, I say, 'Brava!,' for trying to defend the interests of Germany in Europe, but we are not interested in Europe. We are interested in Italy." To that end, he has dropped the Nord from most of his speeches and has gone national with the Party. He said that the growth of Lega in central Italy had persuaded him to "coördinate all Italy" under an anti-Europe and anti-immigration banner. ("Only qualified immigration" is how he pitched this to me.) He has found a champion in France's Marine Le Pen and her ur-Nationalist allies in Austria and Holland, and dismisses Grillo as "much too soft on immigration." (Grillo wants Italy out of Europe more than he wants immigrants out of Italy.)

Renzi's concern is that terrorists now fighting over Libya could slip into Italy, undetected, in the boatloads of refugees trying to flee them. Salvini's concern is that anyone arrives at all. He claimed that there were "twenty-five hundred Islamic cultural centers and mosques in Lombardy" alone, and talked about veiled women all over the housing projects and a proliferation of Islamist media and schools. He called it a transformation "such as we have never seen before." In February—heartened, he says, by the support for Lega in central Italy—he launched his campaign for the South, where xenophobia can be fuelled by ignorance, fear, and racist propaganda in pretty much equal measure.

I went to Strasbourg to speak last year, during my E.U. presidency, and Grillo's people were shouting 'Mafia!' at me, and, when I mentioned Dante Alighieri, Salvini started mocking art," Renzi told me. He talked about

listening to Obama's State of the Union address, and how much he "appreciated the respect" that the President got. (If he had watched it instead, and seen the Tea Party contingent smirking, he might have thought again.) "This year, I will change Italy or change jobs," Renzi said, not for the first time. "The far left is not in a position to stop my government, only to vote against it and call strikes. But the people know that this is the moment when Italy must change. The old Democratic Party got twenty-five per cent of the vote in the last national elections, but, remember, my Democratic Party got forty-one per cent in the European elections last year—that's sixteen percentage points in one year."

Renzi complains about the left as often as he dismisses it. For all his bravado, he is easily aggrieved, a quality he shares with Berlusconi and, like Berlusconi, uses to elicit sympathy and support. Sergio Rizzo is an investigative journalist for *Corriere della Sera* and the co-author of "La Casta," a best-selling book about the extravagant corruption of Italy's political classes. He told me, "I think that Renzi can change the politics here, I really do, but the serious problems are that he's very close to power, and, more important, that he tolerates only people around him who agree with him. He doesn't take well to being crossed. Now when he has an announcement to make he doesn't make it to his party; he goes on television instead."

Carlo Freccero, who once ran Berlusconi's French television channel La Cinq and came home to run a channel for him at RAI, calls Renzi "Berlusconi 2.0"—someone who grasps completely the extent to which, in Italy, politics is theatre and successful politics is a one-man show. It's a tradition as old as the Roman emperors, with their triumphal parades and eviscerating circuses. Mussolini emulated it for twenty years, with dire consequences for the country. Berlusconi turned it into opera buffa, was in office longer than any other Italian Prime Minister, and ended up in court. "In one way, Renzi is a monument to Berlusconi," Freccero told me. "He is a man of spectacle, of entertainment. He knows that 'communications' today is a trompe-

l'oeil, and he's embraced the reality of that, and the language of that. It's a ritornello, a continual refrain: 'Be America! Be the future! Take back the narrative of Europe! Compete!' He wants to be every Italian's selfie."

Giuliano Ferrara, who founded *Il Foglio* and edited the paper until this year, said, "There's something very psychological between Renzi and Berlusconi. Berlusconi has no political heirs, so Renzi is the royal baby. When Renzi was mayor of Florence and Berlusconi was under siege by the magistrates, Renzi went to his home in Milan and had a very human meeting with him. I admired that. And when he became Prime Minister he said, in effect, 'I want to compete with you, not destroy you.'" That, of course, is what he is saying to Angela Merkel now.

Despite the populist filibusters and the grumbling of the ideological Old Guard, Renzi has managed to transform the political landscape of Italy in not much more than a year. On May 4th, his electoral law passed the Camera. The warnings before the voting had been strong. The editor of *Corriere*, referring to Francisco Franco, called Renzi a "young caudillo." The editor of *La Repubblica* called his bill "weakness, disguised as a show of strength." And one of the Democrats' rebel-left leaders, Giuseppe Civati, described it as "genetically modified Presidentialism" and promptly quit the Party, with plans to start a new one of



his own. Inevitably, more defections followed, and several Democratic deputies let it be known that they would vote against the law. Renzi had turned the electoral vote into a vote of confidence; the balloting was secret. Most of the opposition parties—including, on Berlusconi's orders, Forza Italia—refused to vote or walked out. But the bill passed easily without them. After the votes were counted and the news went out (334 in favor, 61 opposed, 4

abstentions, 235 walkouts), it was clear that most Italians liked the prospect of electing governments that might actually last their five-year term. *Corriere* announced that Renzi "is today, and probably will be for a long time, unbeatable, unsinkable." The law is due to go into effect at the end of June, 2016, assuming that the Constitutional Court approves it.

Renzi, meanwhile, was making the television circuit. It's now likely that his constitutional-reform bill will go straight to a national referendum later next summer—and the Senate, which he had first planned to overhaul this summer, will be radically transformed by constitutional change. An early election could come next. But Renzi must have expected to take some knocks by then, and it turned out that he got them quickly, when, late last month, seven of Italy's twenty regions held elections.

In Liguria—which definitely wasn't "over"—the Democrats' left-labor wing ran its own, breakaway candidate, splitting the Party's vote, with the result that a coalition of the right took the region. And while the Party did win five of those seven regions, the vote was nowhere close to its benchmark forty-one per cent in Europe last year. The problem for Renzi was in part apathy. Voters in Italy tend to sit out local elections unless there's money or a grudge or a job or old loyalties at stake, but the low turnout also contained a message. Renzi may have promised the country too much, too fast, for any politician to deliver.

Renzi, who left the country on a "surprise visit" to Italian troops in Afghanistan as the election returns came in, called them "very positive," and produced a short statement saying, "We will push forward with even more determination in the process of renewing the Party and changing this country"—after which he ignored them. It wasn't the worst response. Employment was rising; growth projections, which had been negative since Italy's latest recession began, in 2012, were back above the zero line; and consumption, as Renzi put it after the G7 summit in Bavaria this month, was "showing signs of a reawakening." People can admit to being optimistic.

Earlier this year, I had asked Marianna Madia, Renzi's minister for public

administration, how he did it, and she said, laughing, “Velocity and rupture!” When I put the question to Graziano Delrio, his former chief of staff at the Chigi (and now, in the wake of the construction scandals in Milan, his minister for infrastructure), he said that the mantra was: Decide, then we’ll see. “We wanted to give a violent shock to the Italian system,” he told me. “To the psychology, yes, to the culture, yes, but also to the economy, to labor, to business. And most important was that we *started*. We had a system based on nepotism and seniority. But our duty was to prepare our young people for taking power, and those young people didn’t want to wait in line while the old system got worse and worse.” A moment later, he added, “It’s been quite difficult for us to forge a social contract in a country of so much adventurism and so little clarity in its institutions.”

It may be that, in the end, Matteo Renzi’s future in Italy depends on his future in Angela Merkel’s Europe. Many of the politicians I talked to complained about their frustration in finding common ground with the E.U.’s northern states. “We are not the United States of Europe” is how Delrio put it, talking about the days when Jean Monnet and Robert Schuman, the union’s founding fathers, could look to carbon and steel as the way to create unity and address poverty in a devastated continent. Seventy years on, the stakes are different and the battle lines are drawn in cash.

Merkel is a Lutheran pastor’s daughter who grew up in East Germany during the Cold War, when thrift was not an option but an order of the Politburo. In West Germany, recovery began early, with the Marshall Plan, and continued under an Allied occupation that lasted ten years. Its bombed-out cities and factories were rebuilt and, slowly, its infrastructure was restored. Konrad Adenauer, who in 1949 became the first postwar Chancellor of the Federal Republic, was a Roman Catholic, but there was also a cool Lutheran frugality lurking inside him. He was in office for fourteen years, when thrift *was* an option. He took it. So did Helmut Kohl, who was Chancellor in the nineteen-nineties, when the Federal Republic absorbed East Germany. The country got fat and rich during all those years, but in hard economic



times its governments followed the dictum “Don’t borrow, don’t spend.”

Italy, at the beginning of the Second World War, was still largely an agrarian country. Most of its *contadini* were illiterate; its agricultural arrangements in many regions were close to feudal. And “infrastructure” meant the family, the Church, the party, and, in much of the South, the mafias—umbrellas of support, protection, and, of course, jobs, under different names. In that sense, Italy emerged from the war unchanged. You took care of your own, bought into the swamp, and ignored the indicators of collapse. The perimeters of a good life depended on the umbrella under which you sheltered. You built your house there, put your money under the mattress, and did not invest in anything beyond it. The government did that for you. By the seventies, it was spending and spending, spreading a patchwork quilt of employment and subsidy over your mattress. By the mid-nineties, when the reformist Prime Minister Romano Prodi was elected and tried—and failed—to mend it, the country was going broke. When Mario Monti tried, it *was* broke, and, as for Enrico Letta, he didn’t stand a chance. Today, when Matteo Renzi asks for stimulus money for recovery, he is starting practically from scratch. The one thing his Italy shares with Merkel’s Ger-

many is the reality of a European divide.

Monti told me that, when he was Prime Minister and visited Barack Obama at the White House, Obama admitted to being at a loss to know “how to engage Merkel on matters of economic policy.” Obama asked his advice, and Monti replied, “For Germans, economics is still part of moral philosophy, so don’t even try to suggest that the way to help Europe grow is through public spending. In Germany, growth is the reward for *virtuous* economics, and the word for ‘guilt’ and ‘debt’ is the same.”

It’s safe to say that guilt is not a problem in a country of Sunday confessional absolution. This is a battle that Renzi has to win. “For me, the point is that Italy has come back into the discussion of ‘What is Europe?’” he told me, when we last talked. “In the past, the message was always that ‘Europe’ would teach Italy what to do. The real message now is that we *are* Europe. The perspective has changed. Politics needs passions. Otherwise, you are not the star, you are just a supporting actor.” I asked how long he was planning to play the leading role, and he said that, if all went well, he would be able to get the country to its next scheduled parliamentary elections, in 2018, and then, if he’d been successful and “the people want it,” he would run again—in which case, “on February 22, 2024, I’ll leave. I’ll study. I’ll become a professor!” ♦

The radical choreographer Elizabeth Streb has grown weary of meeting people who tell her, “Oh, you’re the one who ransacks the body and runs into walls.” Streb calls her company the STREB Extreme Action Company, after her method. She calls its headquarters, in Brooklyn, the STREB Lab for Action Mechanics, and she calls her dancers action heroes. She admires various classical and modern dancers and choreographers and works, but her own dancers enact a brash and pitiless system of movement that disdains and subverts politer forms. Of herself and her company, she says, “I am a criminal, and we are a blunt instrument charging forward.”

In a Streb dance called “Gauntlet,” commissioned by Jazz at Lincoln Center, two cinder blocks on ropes swing like pendulums. The dancers congregate where there aren’t any blocks, then leave as they arrive. The escapes are narrow. In “Slice,” the hazard is an I-beam on a chain. The first time I saw “Slice,” in rehearsal, a friend of Streb’s was visiting, and as the I-beam was being hung she said, “You’re in for a treat,” then she shuddered and said, “I can’t watch this.” Other Streb titles are “Crash,” “Impact,” and “Human Fountain.” Each requires the dancers to move rapidly, even desperately. A union stagehand once told Streb, “The last time I saw people move like that, someone yelled, ‘Grenade!’”

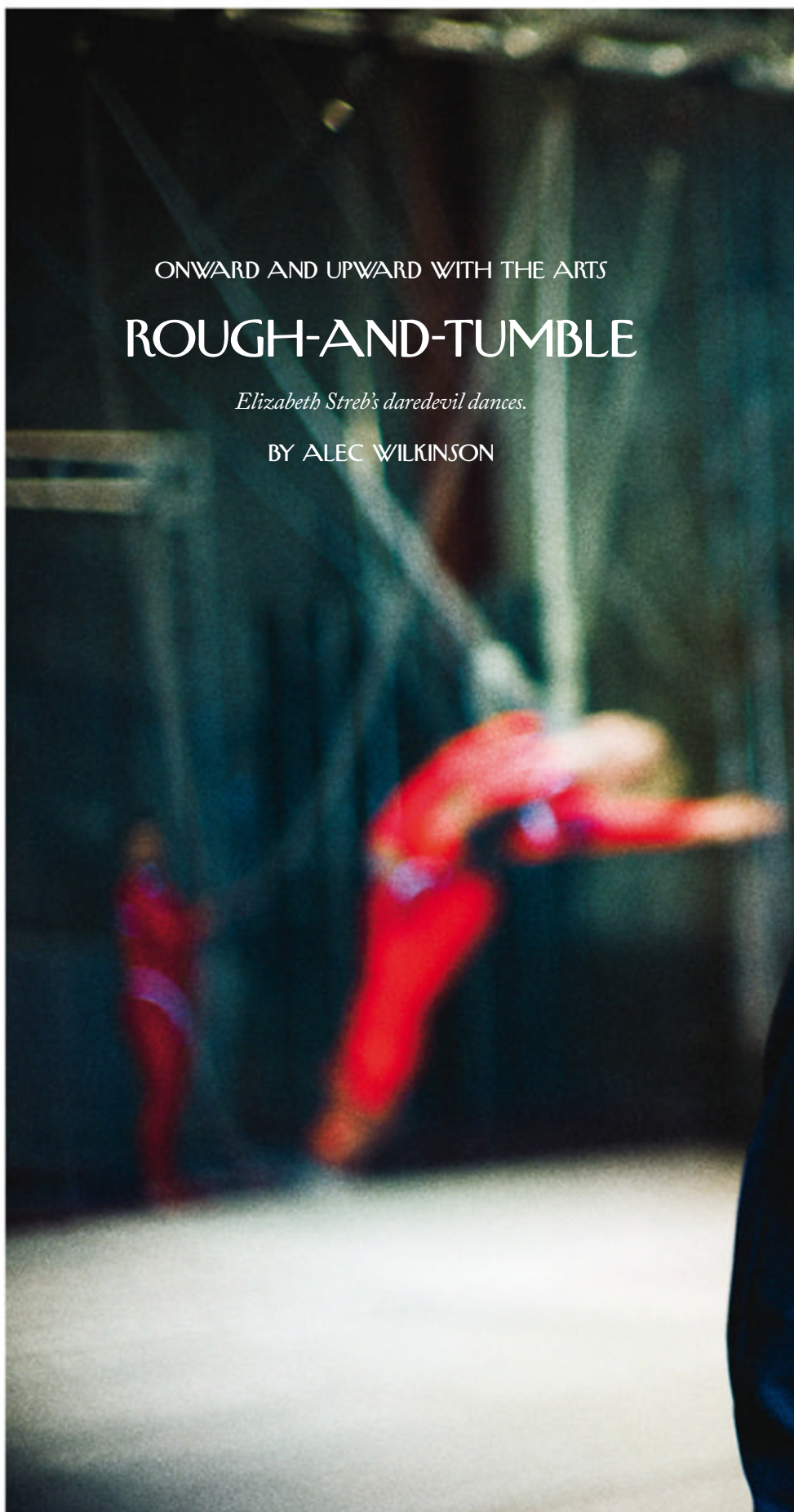
Streb’s dances exemplify her long inquiry into the substance of movement. Certain actions, she believes, are so powerful that they register kines-thetically—in the viewer’s own body, that is. Most people, however, are action-blind. The person or the thing performing the gesture distracts from the gesture itself. She wonders why, when people see a horse running, for example, they say, “There’s a horse galloping,” not, “There’s a gallop.” At the heart of Streb’s inquiry is the ambition to enact flight, to overcome what she calls “the hegemony of the ground.” Ballet dancers and modern dancers fly by leaping, which she discounts as too simplistic to pass for flight. Her dancers simulate flying by stepping from heights and spreading their arms; a critic once wrote that they looked like hawks. Flight figures in many Streb dances, but “Human Fountain” is her

ONWARD AND UPWARD WITH THE ARTS

ROUGH-AND-TUMBLE

Elizabeth Streb’s daredevil dances.

BY ALEC WILKINSON



Streb has described herself as “addicted to physicality,” and her works are famous for an element



of danger. One of her dancers says that, to work with her, "you'd better be able to look fear in the face and not run."

PHOTOGRAPH BY IOULEX

signature flight dance. It is also her longest, her most lavish, and the one she says is her “most lyrical.” It is performed on a broad set of scaffolds, and most recently with twenty-one dancers. The scaffolding is forty feet tall, with platforms at ten, twenty, and thirty feet. At the beginning, a dancer launches from each platform. They land on mats, climb back up the scaffolding, and fall again, as others replace them. For more than ten minutes, the dancers fall singly and in pairs and, when a dancer calls “royal flush,” in quartets. They fall backward and from handstands. They twist in the air, they flip, they mime running, they jackknife, they thrust their chests and strike poses like hood ornaments. At the climax, all twenty-one dancers are in the air. It is like watching swallows dipping over rooftops, at that moment when, wings folded and falling, they are merely forms.

Falling, Streb believes, is an essentialist act, like fire. No embellishment or refinement can make them more like what they are. Years ago, Streb taught herself to fall backward from a standing position. It took weeks to overcome her reluctance. When she was able to fall onto hard floors, especially stone floors, people were impressed. Her dancers learn first to fall close to the ground. One way to experience the force of falling is to prepare to do a pushup, then abruptly withdraw one’s arms, Streb says. A more advanced introductory fall is the table fall, in which, from a standing position, a dancer lifts his or her feet into the air, tilts to become horizontal, and lands on his or her chest. “Falling never gets less scary,” one of the dancers told me. “It’s always this visceral reaction—my palms sweat, my heart leaps.” A dancer who went through a difficult period with falling described “Human Fountain” as “a pure sinistering nightmare.” Streb is sixty-five, and has been retired from dancing since 1998, but there is nothing she asks her dancers to do that she hasn’t done herself, or wouldn’t do. “I put in my thirty years,” she said recently. “I don’t want to say I have a completely broken body, because I’m still walking and talking, but I am the person who has won twenty wars, and I am now sending you out there, and,

live or die, it’s time to fly. I am rough like that, and I don’t apologize.”

Streb has won a MacArthur award and has been a Guggenheim Fellow. Her dances have been performed at the Spoleto Festival, in Charleston, South Carolina; in London, at the Barbican; in Paris, at the Théâtre de la Vie; at the Kennedy Center; and, in New York, at the Joyce Theatre, in Grand Central Terminal, in Central Park, and on the boardwalk at Coney Island. The company will perform in New York in December, at the STREB Lab, and next year at the Barclays Center. A Streb dance typically starts as a drawing made with colored markers in a notebook. Streb also keeps a list of “absurdist inquiries,” such as falling up. In addition, she has a list of fantasy dances. Some are impractical, and some are “past prime”—that is, she is too old to perform them, and they are too dangerous to ask anyone else to do.

Fire fascinates Streb. When she was nine, she accidentally burned down a barn belonging to her uncle while playing with matches. Streb performed a fire dance at the fortieth birthday of her partner, the journalist Laura Flanders, which was held in a warehouse in Brooklyn. “It was about nine or ten at night, December 5, 2001,” Streb said. “I had been trying to think what would be a very special solo I could perform for her—I could put out a fire with my very own body.” She built a lane about sixteen feet long from



two pieces of plywood, like a gangplank. “I had Laura stand at the far end, so I was walking toward her. Halfway down the lane was a pool of Sterno. You don’t really light a fire indoors, but I did. I’m fifty-one. I had carefully measured the size of the fire to be the width of my torso. The lights are dimmed, the music starts, and I begin to walk. Laura sees the fire, and the look on her face is: What are you doing?”

Flanders: “I had no idea what was

going on. She has deeply profound curiosities and passions, and the two things were mixed up together—her passion about me and her passion about fire. As soon as I saw her crouch down, I knew she was going to leap into it.”

“I flew into the air,” Streb said. “I wanted to be high enough that people would see my body above the fire, spread-eagle, and the fire underneath. So I’m in the air, and then, *choom*, I land on the fire. I think the size of the rectangle was incorrect, or I missed. Hard to know. I stood up and looked down, and I went, ‘I am on fire.’ My clothes were on fire. It was the fastest-moving thing I had ever seen, and it was coming up my body, and for a half second I was thinking about the rate of the fire. I had heard stories about firemen getting enraptured by the occurrence of the fire and being stunned momentarily into inaction. I thought, Whoa, if it gets to my hair I’m going to be screwed, and I’m also going to ruin my girlfriend’s party.”

For a moment, no one came to help her. “They all thought that I was supposed to do that,” she said. “Then one of my dancers held the cuffs of my pants, and I wriggled out of them, and I ran out of the room. When I came back to the party, the heterosexuals all said, ‘My boyfriend never did that for me.’ The next day, I was walking down the street, thinking of the people I passed, What did *you* do yesterday? I was on fire. I’m such a jock.”

Streb has spiky black hair, a symmetrical face, and a strong, square jaw and chin. She wears glasses with heavy black frames, and she tends to look at people askance, as if she expected to be challenged. She appears to listen to every word that someone says to her. She dresses handsomely but almost always in the same outfit—dark shirts and dark suits, with broad shoulders and sleeves that cover nearly half of her hands. She tucks her trousers into tall boots that look like motorcycle boots. She walks slightly favoring one knee; she needs to get the other replaced. Since childhood, she has liked to improvise dramatic scenes. The poet and artist Danita Geltner, with whom Streb was once involved, told me that their courtship began one night when she saw Streb at the end of a bar lighting matches and

blowing them out while staring at her.

Streb was born in 1950, in Rochester, New York. When she was two, she was adopted by Leonard and Carolyn Streb. On the adoption papers, her name is Elizabeth Green. She isn't sure of the circumstances of her adoption, but she had a broken arm, and she thinks that she was removed from her birth parents' house by a court order. Leonard Streb was a mason and a carpenter, and he built the house they lived in.

"My parents didn't have anything cultured in the household," Streb said one day, as we were leaving a restaurant downtown. (Streb and Flanders live in SoHo.) "Not music or anything. My father played cards and hunted, and I went with him. He would stay out all day. I definitely was interested in that kind of physicality. He taught me how to shoot a .22 rifle, but when he and his friends were skeet shooting I saw that the shotgun was bigger, so I wanted to shoot that, too. He gave me the gun, and I pulled the trigger and fell down, and all the friends hit the dirt. He thought it was funny, but he also probably thought, You learn from experience, and I was silently absorbing this and thinking, Now I know how to shoot a shotgun."

Streb went to a Catholic high school for girls. At fifteen, with money from working nights as a counter girl at a Woolworth's, she bought a motorcycle. During the next seven years, she bought and sold five more bikes, each larger than the one before. "When I graduated to a Honda 350, the biggest one I ever owned, I experimented with exactly how fast I needed to go for the wheels to lift off the ground," she said. "The answer turned out to be ninety miles per hour."

On weekends in the winter, Streb learned to ski. She liked to go straight downhill. She went to college at SUNY Brockport, where she was surprised to be told in her dance classes to study her form in a mirror rather than note the way that her body felt, and to count time to music rather than move freely. In "How to Become an Extreme Action Hero," published in 2010, she wrote, "I was addicted to physicality. I wanted to feel my body pushing, falling, climbing, catching, watching, and crashing with everything and anything that moved. I was already an ecstatic dancer



"They offer a discount if you book the airline, hotel, and car reservations for completely different cities."

in the world. After accumulating certain memories of motion from these early experiences—meaning skiing and shotguns and motorcycles—"I kept wondering, when would I sense the intensity I was used to in regard to momentum, velocity, impact, rebound, and weight? I kept wanting to actually move."

After graduating in 1972, Streb rode her Honda to San Francisco, paying for the trip with a hundred and twenty dollars she had saved from pumping gas and training as a mechanic. In 1974, she moved to New York. With a friend, she rented an unfinished loft on Canal Street. The first night, rats kept her awake. She was told that it was pointless to try to trap the rats, because they were too smart, so she got a pellet gun and shot at them as they ran along the baseboards. Her father helped her finish the loft, which allowed her to rent out space by the hour to dancers for classes and rehearsals.

The choreographer Bill T. Jones told

me that Streb was "a wonderful dancer. Very athletic, very sexy, with the charisma of a movie star." Sometime in the late nineteen-seventies or early eighties, the stage lights failed as she was holding a fourth-position lunge—one leg forward and one arm held before her. "As I stood there for an inordinate amount of time," she said, "I heard some question pierce my brain: What does this movement mean? It became a question that plagued me. If you can't answer that question, I thought, you are lying to the audience. No more step, step, leap. No more arabesques, no more promenades. If I didn't know what I was doing, or why, I shouldn't do it. In movement terms, it would be tantamount to lying."

In a dance called "Fall Line," presented at Dance Theatre Workshop in 1981, Streb "put up a slanted board, a ramp," the critic Deborah Jowitt, who reviewed "Fall Line" for the *Village Voice*,

told me. "The whole dance was her and a male partner struggling to the top and sliding down." Streb had painted lines on the ramp and varnished it to make it slippery, and she and her partner used the lines as paths. "Fall Line" ended when every path had been used. The critic for the *Times*, Jack Anderson, dismissed the piece as "nothing but one stunt after another." Many of the movements were "genuinely difficult," he wrote. "But what is difficult is not necessarily also automatically interesting."

People began to pay more attention to Streb in 1984, after John Cage wrote that when he first saw Streb perform he "was exhilarated. Her energy, inventiveness, uninterrupted attention are all great. Every time I hear that she is dancing, I arrange to see her work."

Of Streb's early days, Jowitt said, "You didn't look at her and think, This isn't dance. But she was so unlike anyone else. There was this factor of amazement—how did she do that, what if she missed? But you were laughing, too, because some of the propositions were so wild. Who would think of doing a thing like that? Not even, Who would think of that and call it a dance?"

Streb's dances don't tell stories; they aren't made to be beautiful or to illustrate an emotion, an event, or a conceit. They mean what they appear to mean, and they aren't set to music. "Music is

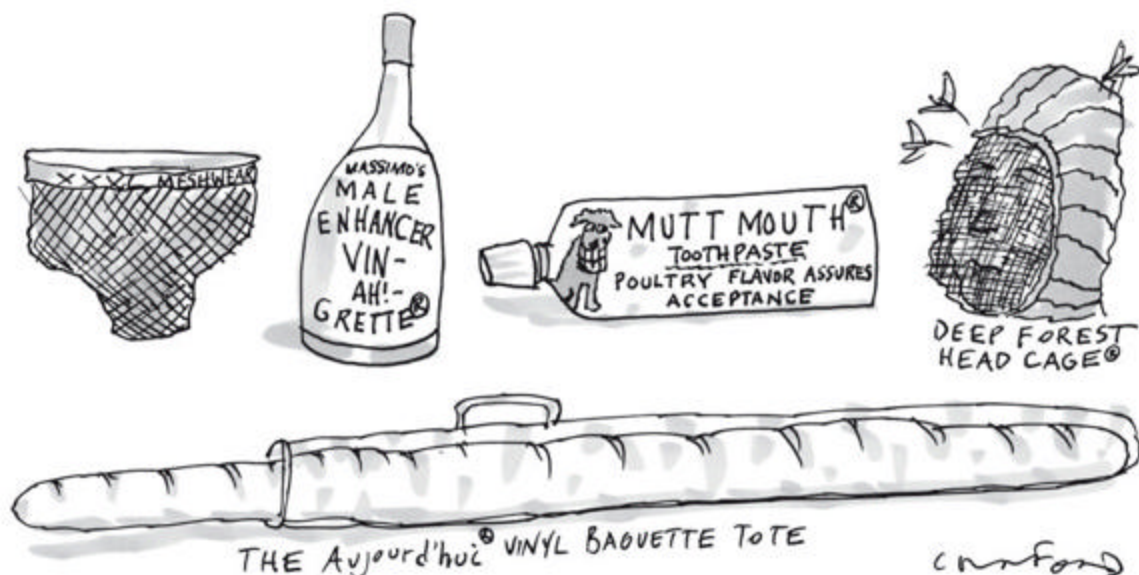
the enemy of dance," Streb says. As she sees it, music bullies a dance into conforming to its rhythm. Rhythm in a Streb dance is flexible and spontaneous, determined by the dancers' capacities and the actions unfolding. Classical and modern dance take place on the floor, with the dancers vertical. A lot of Streb's dances take place in the air, with the dancers horizontal. Transferring weight from one foot to the other while vertical means "that the skeleton is dragging the muscles," Streb says. In her method, "the muscles drag the skeleton." For their safety, her dancers must closely follow the routes they are assigned, and they cannot improvise. Classical and modern dancers generalize about space, Streb says. If they deviate left or right a few feet, it's not likely to matter.

Streb derived her practices partly from studying Eadweard Muybridge's serial photographs of human and animal movements—men and horses running and jumping and so on. To her, each sequence was constructed of preparation, recovery, and subject—that is, of the act itself. She aspired to eliminate the start and the finish, and managed this partly by introducing machines, which get the dancers into the air, often turbulently, and allow them to travel much faster than they could on their own. She calls the machines her company's spaceships, allowing her dancers to reach "unknown, untraversed topographies."

Perhaps a quarter of Streb's dances include machines. She designs them with the help of an engineer, and has them built. She has a machine that she calls Gizmo, which has a pronged counterweight and a wheel large enough for a dancer to stand in. It looks like a circle wearing a dunce hat, and it revolves on a frame. When someone stands in the wheel and walks, the wheel turns. The faster the feet move, the faster the wheel turns. The ground feels as if it were falling away. "It's not like walking on the street prepares you for walking in Gizmo," one of the dancers told me.

Streb also owns a revolving floor, the only STREB machine that has a motor. In the center is a disk that turns while a larger frame turns around it. The disks can be made to turn at different speeds or in opposite directions. While the floor turns, the dancers run as fast as they can and appear to be going nowhere, or revolve and hold a pose, as in a frame of Muybridge. They lean over so far that an invisible object seems to be holding them up. The newest piece of hardware is a turning ladder supported by a scaffold which is used in a dance called "Ascension." Streb's plan had been to have dancers climb the ladder as it revolved, even when they were upside down, but so far no one has been able to climb while facing the ground. The centrifugal force makes the dancers feel that they might

CUSTOMERS WHO BOUGHT ITEMS IN YOUR WISH LIST ALSO BOUGHT



be thrown. Streb says the dancers are close to managing the movement. What is necessary is the same thing needed in many STREB circumstances. "You have to develop a technique to confront your sense of peril," she said.

STREB is based on pursuing what Streb calls a real move. Velocity matters—someone moving who could choose, instead, to be still is probably not performing a real move. A real move, such as a fall, is one that a person would get hurt trying to stop. Streb's dancers are as devoted to finding and enacting real moves as Streb is, but she worries constantly about them. "I have never not been terrified before a performance," she said. She becomes closer to the mothers of her dancers than to the fathers, she says, because the mothers tend to care more about their children's safety.

Auditions for STREB, which are held irregularly, take place at the Lab, in the course of three days, and are rigorous. Streb seeks the dancer "who is most shocking in the way he or she moves." She doesn't like it when people look at her to judge her reaction. She eliminates people who hesitate, hotshots, people who seem not to take direction, and people who won't stop talking. Streb insists that a new dancer stay for three years, because it seems to take two years to reach the level of accomplishment that the others have attained and to gain their trust. Streb also prefers that her dancers be older. "It's not a young person's form," she said. "It's a mature form, because of the responsibility."

There are ten dancers in STREB, five men and five women, from roughly disparate backgrounds. They share the feeling that performing Streb's work is thrilling. The men are Daniel Rysak (whose training is in dance and theatre), Felix Hess (dance and theatre; he and Rysak were in the touring company of "Cats" together), Leonardo Giron (ballet, gymnastics), Jamarious Stewart (dance), and Fabio Tavares (circus, dance, and theatre). The women are Cassandre Joseph (gymnastics, some circus), Samantha Jakus (dance), Sarah Callan (gymnastics, trapeze), Jackie Carlson (ballet), and Justina Grayman (dance and gymnastics). Each new dancer quickly grows muscle-bound. During his first few months at STREB, Jamarious Stewart

told me, "I felt my body changing dramatically." Daniel Rysak said, "Being a formal dancer, standing on the soles of your feet, you're really bottom-strong. In STREB, you have to rely on the strength of your arms and your grip." Unlike in ballet and modern dance, the women are effectively as strong as the men, and they do not occupy gender roles. A woman in STREB is just as likely to catch a man thrown into the air as a man is to catch a woman.

Cassandre Joseph told me that dancing in STREB "means that you'd better be able to look fear in the face and not run." Not all dancers are afraid of the same things. Some fear certain machines, some fear falling from heights, some fear not being able to do a necessary movement or making a mistake that might injure them or someone else. Samantha Jakus told me that a few years ago she felt overtaken by fear, and to shed it she enrolled in a school for professional wrestlers. She also became "an avid reader of fear-and-anxiety books." Sarah Callan, however, told me, "I think the fear is why I like it. It's hard to explain. Especially to my parents."

Often, when a dancer undertakes a challenging move, Streb flinches. I found myself averting my eyes most frequently from the landings. STREB dancers land precisely horizontal, so that no part of the body takes more force than another. "If you tilt before you land, you're going to get walloped," Streb said. A conventional dancer would memorize his or her form in a mirror. You can't look in a mirror when you're falling. I asked Cassandre Joseph how she knows she is horizontal. "Spatial awareness and muscle memory," she said. "Your body knows: I've been here before."

Releasing properly from the platform helps a dancer become horizontal. "If you go late or early, you compromise the fall," Fabio Tavares said. "It's not a jump, it's a small push with your toes." Watching weeks of rehearsals for the Barclays Center show, I saw a dancer fall improperly only once. This was Justina Grayman, the newest member, who joined last September. She fell from twenty feet. The dancers somehow land quietly, but her landing made enough noise that everyone stopped and looked at her as she lay on the mat turning her head slowly from side

to side. Her jaw hurt, she said later.

When I asked Tavares what had gone wrong, he said, "She looked for the floor." Grayman said, "You think, Oh, I'm falling, put your hands out. That's what you know is true, but it doesn't help in this situation."

"It's almost as if you have to abandon the idea of falling to fall correctly," Tavares told me. As Grayman rose to try again, he told her, "Fall slower."

The greatest height a STREB dancer has fallen from is forty feet. This was a fall done informally by Felix Hess, in Central Park, before a performance of "Human Fountain," in the summer of 2013. The top of the scaffolding is forty feet. "We always joked about Level 4," Hess told me. "It was just a curiosity. The ceiling in the studio gets in the way—Level 4 would be on the roof—but that day we had the whole sky above us, and I climbed up and sat there for a long time. I was just feeling very strong, and it felt like one of those moments to do something very special."

Hess stood atop the scaffolding, with the company watching him below. "The more I looked at it, the more I thought I could do it," he said. At the top of the fall, his arms twirled once compactly, as if to steady himself. He kept his eyes open as he fell, he said, so that he could "watch the ride." He hit the ground and stood so quickly that he seemed to bounce. The dancers cheered wildly.

The next day, Hess wrote to Streb, in an e-mail, "Most noteworthy was the feeling in my face from the impact. My hit was flush. But internally my eyes and brain are still aware of the feeling twenty-four hours later." When, after a rehearsal, I asked what he meant, he said, "My eyeballs felt like they got pressed against my skull, and I could feel my organs, because everything had slammed against my skeleton."

Streb likened the impact to being in a car crash. Hess wrote that he thought the fall could "only be added with extreme caution."

Critics who aren't sympathetic to Streb's methods or don't understand them usually conclude that her dances are made of feats and tricks. Some simply don't like them. "Too spectacle for me—also too earnest, too



"Can't say I'm surprised. It's a notoriously difficult piece of music."

immodest," the choreographer Susan Rethorst wrote me. Some of Streb's peers take her more seriously, though. "Elizabeth's work is fearless and complex," Mikhail Baryshnikov wrote in an e-mail. "When I first saw it, I was puzzled about how it made me feel—what was it about? It's an interesting question that I can't ever answer completely—and perhaps it's many answers all at once: Is it art to provoke? (Certainly.) Is it art to please? (Definitely not.) Is it art for survival? (Good question!)"

Bill T. Jones told me that he had complicated feelings about her approach,

"because a hallmark of many of us who come from that generation after Martha Graham or Merce Cunningham, even after Trisha Brown, was finding another way to move. Attacking assumptions was what mattered," not abandoning them. "I'm still attached to expressionism in dance, to psychology in dance, and to beauty." The redeeming thing about Streb, he said, "is that she has great generosity of spirit, so you don't feel like her pursuit of form is a critique of your own."

I asked whether he thought her work was dance. "There have been times when

I've wondered, Wouldn't this be better if it were circus?" he said. "If you see what Chinese acrobats are able to do, or gymnasts, the extreme virtuosity and accomplishment, there's a thousand years of how to balance and flip." Streb's work "has the thrills of circus, but you get the feeling you're encountering an intellect using a whole series of interlocking questions," he went on. "And that's when it gets serious and interesting, and moves into that realm that I have to call art."

One day, I had breakfast with Streb. "I'm probably not doing dance," she said. "That's probably not what I'm doing. I think that's why people have a problem with it. It contradicts their understanding of dance. People ask how I would like my work described. The usual reply is 'That's not my job.' The difficulty is having to find a place for myself, and the closest one I can find is dance, so we're trapped with each other. But I think my form offends people. What I do is perceived as transgressive to the body, maybe harmful. It's a split-second technique based on getting your whole body to move as a unit to levitate off the ground or land flat. Modern dancers could only move this fast with their feet. It's a different timing, a different use of the body."

A waiter brought us coffee. "So what is this animal, this action animal?" Streb said. "It's maybe not modern dance, it's not sports, it's not circus. It's easier to say what it is not. Why not circus? I am attached to building paragraphs of action. Circus does prepositions, meaning their sentences are short, and they stop a lot. Their grammar and syntax are less complex, and they ask for less time from the viewer's eye. They keep stopping and getting applause. The circus has the capacity to amaze but not to move."

Looking into her coffee, she said, "I'm engaged in an impractical idea, I know that. It may not be noticed for a hundred years. It may never be noticed. Flying is a foolish quest, and I've trained myself not to be defensive about what people might say."

After breakfast, we drove in Streb's old Honda jeep to the Lab in Williamsburg for a rehearsal. A piece in rehearsal begins with a "talk walk," in which each dancer narrates his or her part in the sequence in which it is

performed. Working on a dance for the Barclays Center, one of the dancers said, “Run run run, run run fly.” Another said, “Helicopter go.” “Swipe out,” said a third. When the piece ended, they gathered before Streb, who gave them remarks she had written on a yellow legal pad. They moved all together, as if in a flock. They only briefly took their eyes from her. “I want you to be like one million stones falling from the sky, but they don’t catch up with each other,” she said. And: “Don’t give out to the audience that there are invisible forces against you.” And: “Chaos is what we want. How do we legislate that?”

A maxim that Streb uses with the dancers is “Harder, faster, sooner, higher.” There is no STREB manual; a new dancer learns to fall and to perform the tasks that he or she is given by watching, but there are a couple of precepts that recur. The STREB Law of Timing says that you do a move in as much time as it takes your body to do that move (no more, no less) given the skill that you have. A corollary is that you can do whatever you want whenever you can, meaning that if a dancer wants to look at the audience and grin while flying, he or she can. The can is a form of imperative, since if the dancer can’t, he or she probably gets hurt.

Last February, Jamarious Stewart fell off the ladder during “Ascension,” at the Hammerstein Ballroom, in Manhattan. He fell about fifteen feet, twisting in the air like a corkscrew. He scampered up so fast that no one in the audience seemed to register that the fall wasn’t part of the dance.

“I don’t know what happened,” he said afterward. He was lying on a couch in the dressing room, with an ice pack on his back. The other members of the company had gathered around him. It was a small room, and it felt like being in a den or a cave. “I remember climbing, then my foot slipped, I think, and it caused my hands to slip, and then I was free-falling. It was like everything went white, and when I came back to reality I was standing on top of the ladder again.” He had a compression fracture in one of his vertebrae, which led to his observing rehearsals for a few days.

The most serious injury in STREB’s history happened to a dancer named

DeeAnn Nelson, in 2007. During a piece called “Two Moving Planks,” she tripped and fell about six feet into a plow position, on her back with her legs above her head. “It was not a position we trained to fall into,” she said. “I knew something really bad had happened.” She made it backstage but collapsed, and her body “started to seize, like it was beginning to cramp, and I remember feeling like my diaphragm might stop working, and then I couldn’t get up.” Nelson had a compression fracture that required spinal surgery and pins to correct. She had a child recently, and took part in an Ironman competition, but she has never returned to dancing.

At the rehearsal, Streb sat at a folding table with several notebooks spread before her. “I’m always thinking, What’s a cheap new piece I could make?” she said. “Cinder blocks? No. I-beams? No. I’ve been walking around thinking about a piece I could buy at a lumberyard or a hardware store. Like railroad ties. But I can’t think of one other thing. Glass? No. Sheet metal? No. I did a sheet-metal dance once, and it didn’t really work.”

She was trying air rams, pneumatic devices used in movies to throw people from an explosion. The air rams are small, square platforms, with an “X” in the center. When you step on the “X,” you get thrown. How far depends on the amount of pressure the machine is



set to exert. “My original idea was to fly the dancers across the stage,” she said. “Then, halfway, they would burst into flames, and on the other side someone would put the flames out.”

The machines were set at a relatively low fifteen pounds per square inch. The dancers travelled about six or eight feet in the air, as if they had bounced off a diving board. Most of them, though, stood against a wall. “You see how they’re lurking,” Streb said. The dancers really

don’t like air rams. “Every time I go toward it, I have to go to that Zen breathing place,” Cassandra Joseph said. “Everything else we do, we control the force of it. Air rams have their own mind.” Streb asked Matt McAdon, the company’s technical director, if he could raise the pressure to twenty. “If I was able to put it where I wanted, they’d be gone,” she said. Several dancers launched themselves halfheartedly. “You can’t force people to do things,” Streb said. “They’re basically scared of this machine. Too bad I can’t just run and jump and say, ‘Do this.’”

After a few more minutes, Streb said, “How about one more, Leonardo. Then we close down and go on.” Giron flew off the platform, leaned back, and turned a languorous somersault backward in the air. Streb flinched, then said, “Wow. Doing a backflip while you’re travelling is so anti-intuitive.” Then she said, “O.K., thank you, everyone, we got our feet wet.” McAdon began dismantling the air rams.

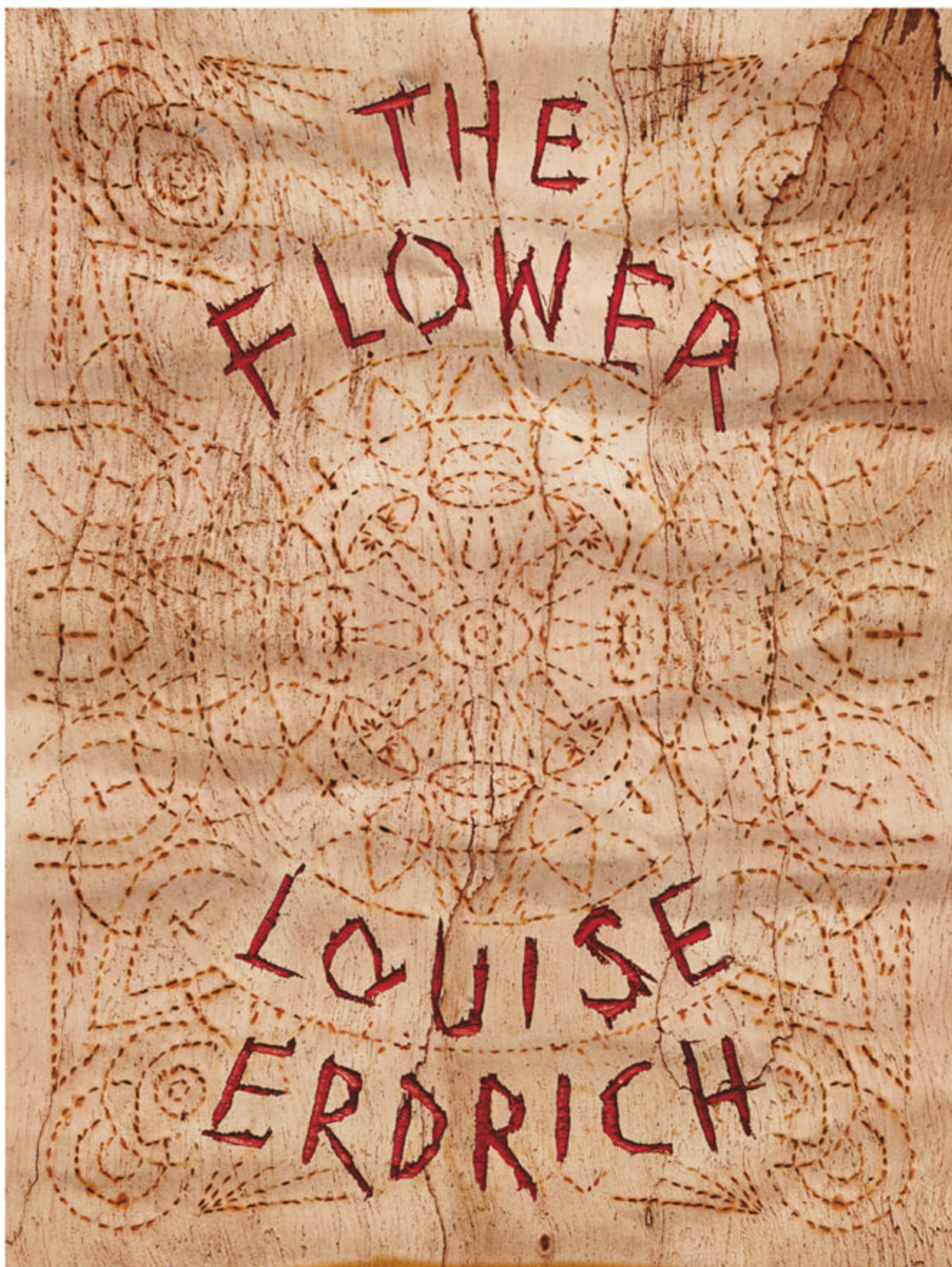
Streb was excited about Giron’s backflip. Each time a dancer performs a move that Streb hasn’t seen, he or she adds to STREB’s vocabulary. “That kind of invention is crucial,” she said. “My dream, what I hope for most of all, is that this inquiry of mine is a transferable methodology. If it’s accurate in terms of time, space, forces, and body, and an astute mind could take that frame into the future, then it will have a bigger life than just me.”

“Do you expect that?”

“I think maybe the future of dance is not a single person bossing people around until he or she dies,” she said. “Maybe it’s the generation of an inquiry, based on a system, a methodology that gets established somehow, maybe through a single person’s provocation. Something more like an oral history than the work of a single author. I didn’t really invent this format, because physics exists. I just combined the conditions I was obsessed with, like hardware and action, and then spent thirty years fiddling with them. Who knows where it could go if I get out of the way.”

“What would you do then?”

She took a moment to respond. “I could do a walkabout somewhere in Africa or Asia,” she said. “Wave my flag and walk off into the desert.” ♦



Outside an isolated Ojibwe country trading post in the year 1839, Mink was making an incessant racket. She wanted what Mackinnon had, trader's milk—a mixture of raw distilled spirits, rum, red pepper, and tobacco. She had bawled and screeched her way to possession of a keg before. The noise paled at Mackinnon's nerves, but he wouldn't beat her into silence. Mink was from a family of powerful healers. She had been the beautiful daughter of Shingobii, a supplier of rich furs. She had also been the beautiful wife of Mashkiig, until he destroyed her face and stabbed her younger brothers to death. Their eleven-year-old daughter huddled with her now, under the same greasy blanket, trying to hide. Inside the post, Mackinnon's clerk, Wolfred Roberts, had swathed his head in a fox pelt to muffle the sound, fastening the desiccated paws beneath his chin. He wrote in an elegant, sloping hand, three items between lines. Out there in the bush, they were always afraid of running out of paper.

Wolfred had left his home in Portsmouth, New Hampshire, because he was the youngest of four brothers and there was no room for him in the family business—a bakery. His mother was the daughter of a schoolteacher, and she had educated him. He was just seventeen. He missed her, and he missed the books. He had taken only two with him when he was sent to clerk with Mackinnon: a pocket dictionary and Xenophon's "Anabasis and Memorabilia," which had belonged to his grandfather, and which his mother hadn't known contained lewd descriptions.

Even with the fox on his head, the screeching rattled him. He tried to clean up around the fireplace, and threw a pile of scraps out for the dogs. As soon as he walked back inside, there was pandemonium. Mink and her daughter were fighting the dogs off. The noise was hideous.

Don't go out there. I forbid you, Mackinnon said. If the dogs kill and eat them, there will be less trouble.

The humans eventually won the fight, but the noise continued into darkness.

Mink started hollering again before sunup. Her high-pitched wailing was even louder now. The men were scratchy-eyed and tired. Mackinnon kicked her, or kicked one of them, as he passed. She went hoarse that afternoon, which only

made her voice more irritating. Something in it had changed, Wolfred thought. He didn't understand the language very well.

That rough old bitch wants to sell me her daughter, Mackinnon said.

Mink's voice was horrid—intimate with filth—as she described the things the girl could do if Mackinnon would only give over the milk. She was directing the full force of her shrieks at the closed door. Part of Wolfred's job was to catch and clean fish if Mackinnon asked. He went down to the hole he kept open in the icy river, crossing himself as he walked past Mink. Although of course he wasn't Catholic, the gesture had caught where Jesuits had been. When he returned, Mink was gone and the girl was inside the post, crouching in the corner underneath a new blanket, her head down, still as death.

I couldn't stand it another minute, Mackinnon said.

Wolfred stared at the blanketed lump of girl. Mackinnon had always been honest, for a trader. Fair, for a trader, and showed no signs of moral corruption beyond the usual—selling rum to Indians was outlawed. Wolfred could not take in what had happened, so again he went fishing. When he came back with another stringer of whitefish, his mind was clear. Mackinnon was a rescuer, he decided. He had saved the girl from Mink, and from a slave's fate elsewhere. Wolfred chopped some kindling and built a small cooking fire beside the post. He roasted the fish whole, and Mackinnon ate them with last week's tough bread. Tomorrow, Wolfred would bake. When he went back into the cabin, the girl was exactly where she'd been before. She hadn't moved a hair. Which also meant that Mackinnon hadn't touched her.

Wolfred put a plate of bread and fish on the dirt floor where she could reach it. She devoured both and gasped for breath. He set a tankard of water near her. She gulped it all down, her throat clucking like a baby's as she drained the cup.

After Mackinnon had eaten, he crawled into his slat-and-bearskin bed, where it was his habit to drink himself to sleep. Wolfred cleaned up the cabin. Then he heated a pail of water and crouched near the girl. He wet a rag and dabbed at her face. As the caked dirt came off, he discovered her features, one

by one, and saw that they were very fine. Her lips were small and full. Her eyes hauntingly sweet. Her eyebrows perfectly flared. When her face was uncovered, he stared at her in dismay. She was exquisite. Did Mackinnon know?

Gimiikwaadiz, Wolfred whispered. He knew the word for how she looked.

Carefully, reaching into the corner of the cabin for what he needed, he mixed mud. He held her chin and spread the muck back onto her face, blotting over the startling line of her brows, the perfect symmetry of her eyes and nose, the devastating curve of her lips.

Mackinnon spoke to the girl in her language, and she hid her muddy face.

All I did was ask her name, he said, throwing up his hands. She refuses to tell me her name. Give her some work to do, Roberts. I can't stand that lump in the corner.

Wolfred made her help him chop wood. But her movements displayed the fluid grace of her limbs. He showed her how to bake bread. But the fire lit up her face and the heat melted away some of the mud. He reapplied it. When Mackinnon was out, he tried to teach her to write. She learned the alphabet easily. But writing displayed her hand, marvelously formed. Finally—at her suggestion—she went off to set snares and a trapline. She made herself well enough understood. She planned to buy herself back from Mackinnon by selling the furs. He hadn't paid that much for her. It would not take long, she implied.

All this time, because she knew exactly why Wolfred had replaced the grime on her face, she slouched and grimaced, tousled her hair, and smeared her features.

She picked up another written letter every day, then words, phrases. She began to sprinkle them in her talk. For a wild savage, she was certainly intelligent, Wolfred thought. Pretty soon she's going to take my job. Ha-ha. There was nobody to joke with but himself.

The daughter of Mink brooded on the endlessly shifting snow. *I will make a fire myself, as the stinking chimookoman won't let me near his fire at night. Then I can pick the lice from my dress and my blanket. His lice will crawl on me again if he does the old stinking*

chimookoman thing he does. She saw herself lifting the knife from his belt and slipping it between his ribs.

The other one, the young one, was kind but had no power. He didn't understand what the crafty old *chimookoman* was doing. Her struggles seemed only to give the drooling dog strength, and he knew exactly how to pin her, how to make her helpless.

The birds were silent. She had scrubbed her body red with snow. She threw off everything and lay naked in the snow asking to be dead. She tried not to move, but the cold was bitter and she began to suffer intensely. A person from the other world came. The being was pale blue, without definite form. It took care of her, dressed her, tied on her *makizinan*, blew the lice off, and wrapped her in a new blanket, saying, Call upon me when this happens, and you shall live.

Wolfred hacked off a piece of weasel-gnawed moose. He carried it into the cabin and put it in a pot heaped with snow. He built up the fire just right and hung the pot to boil. He had learned from the girl to harvest red-gold berries, withered a bit in winter, which gave the meat a slightly skunky but pleasant flavor. She had taught him how to make tea from leathery swamp leaves. She had shown him rock lichen, edible but bland. The day was half gone.

Mashkiig, the girl's father, walked in, lean and fearsome, with two slinking minions. He glanced at the girl, then looked away. He traded his furs for rum and guns. Mackinnon told him to get drunk far from the trading post. The day he'd killed the girl's uncles, Mashkiig had also stabbed everyone else in the vicinity. He'd slit Mink's nose and ears. Now he tried to claim the girl, then to buy her, but Mackinnon wouldn't take back any of the guns.

After Mashkiig left, Mackinnon and Wolfred each took a piss, hauled some wood in, then locked the inside shutters and loaded their guns. About a week later, they heard that he'd killed Mink. The girl put her head down and wept.

Wolfred was a clerk of greater value than he knew. He cooked well and could make bread from practically nothing. He'd kept his father's yeast going halfway across North America, and he

was always seeking new sources of provender. He was using up the milled flour that Mackinnon had brought to trade. The Indians hadn't got a taste for it yet. Wolfred had ground wild rice to powder and added it to the stuff they had. Last summer, he had mounded up clay and hollowed it out into an earthen oven. That was where he baked his weekly loaves. As the loaves were browning, Mackinnon came outside. The scent of the bread so moved him, there in the dark of winter, that he opened a keg of wine. They'd had six kegs, and were down to five. Mackinnon had packed the good wine in himself, over innumerable portages. Ordinarily, he partook of the trader's rum that the voyageurs humped in to supply and resupply the Indians. Now he and Wolfred drank together, sitting on two stumps by the heated oven and a leaping fire.

Outside the circle of warmth, the snow squeaked and the stars pulsed in the impenetrable heavens. The girl sat between them, not drinking. She thought her own burdensome thoughts. From time to time, both of the men glanced at her profile in the firelight. Her dirty face was brushed with raw gold. When the wine was drunk, the bread was baked. Reverently, they removed the loaves and put them, hot, inside their coats. The girl opened her blanket to accept a loaf from Wolfred. As he gave it to her, he realized that her dress was torn down the middle. He looked into her eyes and her eyes slid to Mackinnon. Then she ducked her head and held the dress together with her elbow while she bit into the loaf.

Inside, they sat on small stumps, around a bigger stump, to eat. The cabin had been built around the large stump so that it could serve as a table.

Wolfred looked so searchingly at Mackinnon that the trader finally said, What?

Mackinnon had a flaccid bladder belly, crab legs, a snoose-stained beard, pigmad red eyes, red sprouts of dandered hair, wormish lips, pitchy teeth, breath that knocked you sideways, and nose hairs that dripped snot on and spoiled Wolfred's perfectly inked numbers. Mackinnon was also a dead shot, and hell with his claw hammer. Wolfred had seen him use it on one of the very minions who'd shadowed Mashkiig that day. He was dangerous. Yet. Wolfred chewed

and stared. He was seized with sharp emotion. For the first time in his life, Wolfred began to see the things of which he was capable.

Wolfred sorted through the options: They could run away, but Mackinnon would not only pursue them but pay Mashkiig to get to them first. They could stick together at all times so that Wolfred could watch over her, but that would make it obvious that Wolfred knew and they would lose the element of surprise. Xenophon had lain awake in the night, asking himself this question: What age am I waiting for to come to myself? This age, Wolfred thought. Because they had to kill Mackinnon, of course. Really, it was the first thing Wolfred had thought of doing, and the only way. To feel better about it, however, he had examined all the options.

How to do it?

Shooting him was out. There might be justice. Killing him by axe, hatchet, knife, or rock, or tying him up and stuffing him under the ice were also risky that way. As he lay in the faltering dark imagining each scenario, Wolfred remembered how he'd walked the woods with her. She knew everything there was to eat in the woods. She probably knew everything not to eat as well. She probably knew poisons.

Alone with her the next day, he saw that she'd managed to sew her dress together with a length of sinew. He pointed to the dress, pointed in the general direction of Mackinnon, then proceeded to mime out picking something, cooking it, Mackinnon eating it, holding his belly and pitching over dead. It made her laugh behind her hand. He convinced her that it was not a joke and she began to wash her hands in the air, biting her lip, darting glances all around, as though even the needles on the pines knew what they were planning. Then she signalled him to follow.

She searched the woods until she found a stand of oaks, then put a cloth on her hand and plunged it into the snow near a cracked-off stump, rotted down to almost nothing. From beneath the snow she pulled out some dark-gray strands that might once have been mushrooms.

That night Wolfred used the breast meat of six partridges, the tenders of three rabbits, wild onions, a shrivelled

blue potato, and the girl's offering to make a highly salted and strongly flavored stew. He unplugged a keg of high wine, and made sure that Mackinnon drained it half down before he ate. The stew did not seem to affect him. They all went to their corners, and Mackinnon kept on drinking the way he usually did until the fire burned out.

In the middle of the night, his thrashing, grunting, and high squeals of pain woke them. Wolfred lit a lantern. Mackinnon's entire head had turned purple and had swollen to a grotesque size. His eyes had vanished in the bloated flesh. His tongue, a mottled fish, bulged from what must have been his mouth. He seemed to be trying to throw himself out of his body. He cast himself violently at the log walls, into the fireplace, upon the mounds of furs and blankets, rattling guns off their wooden hooks. Ammunition, ribbons, and hawkbells rained off the shelves. His belly popped from his vest, round and hard as a boulder. His hands and feet filled like bladders. Wolfred had never witnessed anything remotely as terrifying, but he had the presence of mind not to club Mackinnon or in any way molest his monstrous presence. As for the girl, she seemed pleased at his condition, though she did not smile.

Trying to disregard the chaotic death occurring to his left, now to his right, now underfoot, Wolfred prepared to leave. He grabbed snowshoes and two packs, moving clumsily. In the packs he put two fire steels, ammunition, bannocks he had made in advance. He doubled up two blankets and another to cut for leggings, and outfitted himself and the girl with four knives apiece. He took two guns, wadding, and a large flask of gunpowder. He took salt, tobacco, Mackinnon's precious coffee, and one of the remaining kegs of wine. He did not take overmuch coin, though he knew which hollowed log hid the trader's tiny stash.

Mackinnon's puffed mitts of hands fretted at his clothing and the threads burst. As Wolfred and the girl slipped out, they could hear him fighting the poison, his breath coming in sonorous gasps. He could barely draw air past his swelled tongue into his gigantic purpled head. Yet he managed to call feebly out to them, My children! Why are you leaving me?

From the other side of the door they could hear his legs drumming on the packed earth floor. They could hear his fat paws wildly pattering for water on the empty wooden bucket.

On snowshoes of ash wood and sinew, Wolfred and the girl made their way south. They would be easy to follow. Wolfred's story was that they'd decided to travel toward Grand Portage for help. They had left Mackinnon ill in the cabin with plenty of supplies. If they got lost, wandered, found themselves even farther south, chances were nobody would know or care who Mackinnon was. And so they trekked, making good time, and set up their camp at night. The girl tested the currents of the air with her face and hands, then showed Wolfred where to build a lean-to, how to place it just so, how to find dry wood in snow, snapping dead branches out of trees, and where to pile it so that they could easily keep the fire going all night and direct its heat their way. They slept peacefully, curled in their separate blankets, and woke to

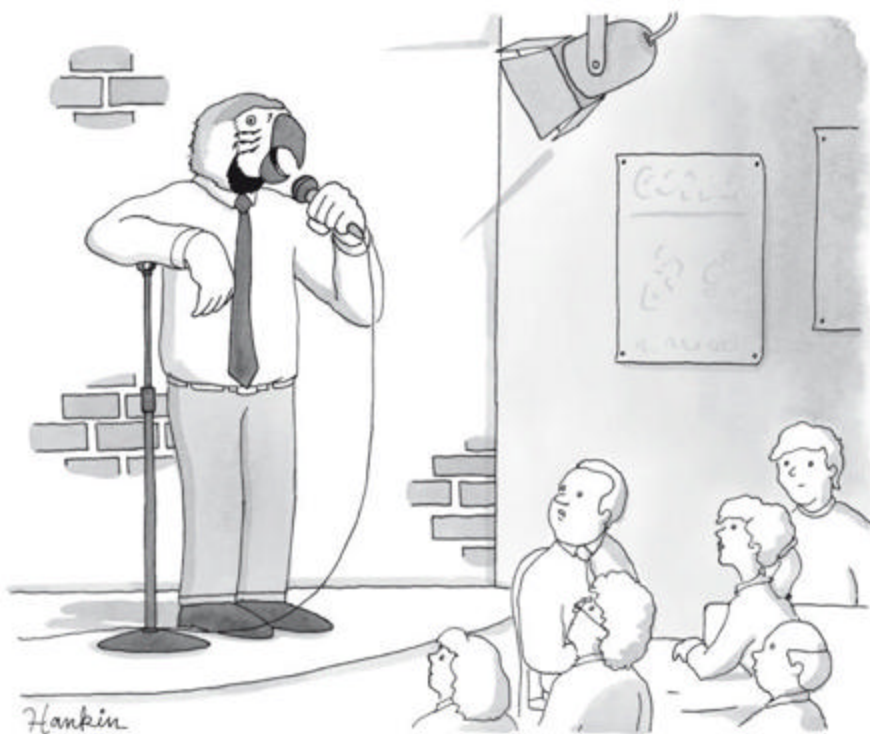
the wintertime scolding of chickadees.

The girl tuned up the fire, they ate, and were back on their way south when suddenly they heard the awful gasping voice of Mackinnon behind them. They could hear him blundering toward them, cracking twigs, calling out to them, Wait, my children, wait a moment, do not abandon me!

They started forward in terror. Soon a dog drew near them, one of the trading post's pathetic curs; it ran alongside them, bounding effortfully through the snow. At first they thought that Mackinnon had sent it to find them, but then the girl stopped and looked hard at the dog. It whined to her. She nodded and pointed the way through the trees to a frozen river, where they would move more quickly. On the river ice they slid along with a dreamlike velocity. The girl gave the dog a piece of bannock from her pocket, and that night, when they made camp, she set her snares out all around them. She built their fire and the lean-to so that they had to pass through a narrow space between two trees. Here, too, she set a snare. Its loop was large



"You're still thinking about the maple-bacon funnel cake, aren't you?"



"Who here likes impressions?"

enough for a man's head, even a horribly swollen one. They fed themselves and the dog, and slept with their knives out, packs and snowshoes close by.

Near morning, when the fire was down to coals, Wolfred woke. He heard Mackinnon's rasping breath very close. The dog barked. The girl got up and signalled that Wolfred should fasten on his snowshoes and gather their packs and blankets. As the light came up, Wolfred saw that the sinew snare set for Mackinnon was jiggling, pulled tight. The dog worried and tore at some invisible shape. The girl showed Wolfred how to climb over the lean-to another way, and made him understand that he should check the snares she'd set, retrieve anything they'd caught, and not forget to remove the sinews so that she could reset them at their next camp.

Mackinnon's breathing resounded through the clearing around the fire. As Wolfred left, he saw that the girl was preparing a stick with pine pitch and birch bark. He saw her thrust it at the air again and again. There were muffled grunts of pain. Wolfred was so frightened that he had trouble finding all the snares, and he had to cut the sinew

that had choked a frozen rabbit. Eventually, the girl joined him and they slid back down to the river with the dog. Behind them, unearthly caterwauls began. To Wolfred's relief, the girl smiled and skimmed forward, calm, full of confidence. Though she was still a child.

Wolfred asked the girl to tell him her name. He asked in words, he asked in signs, but she wouldn't speak. Each time they stopped, he asked. But though she smiled at him, and understood exactly what he wanted, she wouldn't answer. She looked into the distance.

The next morning, after they had slept soundly, she knelt near the fire to blow it back to life. All of a sudden, she went still and stared into the trees. She jutted her chin forward, then pulled back her hair and narrowed her eyes. Wolfred followed her gaze and saw it, too. Mackinnon's head, rolling laboriously over the snow, its hair on fire, flames cheerfully flickering. Sometimes it banged into a tree and whimpered. Sometimes it propelled itself along with its tongue, its slight stump of neck, or its comically paddling ears. Sometimes it whizzed

along for a few feet, then quit, sobbing in frustration at its awkward, interminable progress.

Fighting, outwitting, burning, even leaving food behind for the head to gobble, just to slow it down, the girl, Wolfred, and the dog travelled. They wore out their snowshoes, and the girl repaired them. Their moccasins shredded. She layered the bottoms with skin and lined them with rabbit fur. Every time they tried to rest, the head would appear, bawling at night, fiery at dawn. So they moved on and on, until, at last, starved and frozen, they gave out.

The small bark hut took most of a day to bind together. As they prepared to sleep, Wolfred arranged a log on the fire and then fell back as if struck. The simple action had dizzied him. His strength had flowed right out through his fingers into the fire. The fire now sank quickly from his sight, as if over some invisible cliff. He began to shiver, hard, and then a black wall fell. He was confined in a temple of branching halls. All that night he groped his way through narrow passages, along doorless walls. He crept around corners, stayed low. Standing was impossible, even in his dreams. When he opened his eyes at first light, he saw that the vague dome of the hut was spinning so savagely that it blurred and sickened him. He did not dare to open his eyes again that day, but lay as still as possible, lifting his head only to sip the water the girl dripped between his lips from a piece of folded bark.

He told her to leave him behind. She pretended not to understand him.

All day she cared for him, hauling wood, boiling broth, keeping him warm. That night the dog growled ferociously at the door, and Wolfred opened one eye briefly to see infinitely duplicated images of the girl heating the blade of the axe red hot and gripping the handle with rags. He felt her slip out the door, and then there began a great babble of howling, cursing, shrieking, desperate groaning and thumping, as if trees were being felled. This went on all night. At first light, he sensed that she'd crept inside again. He felt the warmth and weight of her curled against his back, smelled the singed fur of the dog or maybe her hair. Hours into the day, she woke, and he heard her tuning a drum in the warmth

of the fire. Surprised, he asked her, in Ojibwe, how she'd got the drum.

It flew to me, she told him. This drum belonged to my mother. With this drum, she brought people to life.

He must have heard wrong, or misunderstood. Drums cannot fly. He was not dead. Or was he? The world behind his closed eyes was ever stranger. From the many-roomed black temple, he had stepped into a universe of fractured patterns. There was no relief from their implacable mathematics. Designs formed and re-formed. Hard-edged triangles joined and split in an endless geometry. If this was death, it was visually exhausting. Only when she started drumming did the patterns gradually lose their intensity. Their movement diminished as she sang in an off-key, high-pitched, nasal whine that rose and fell in calming repetition. The drum corrected some interior rhythm, a delicious relaxation painted his thoughts, and he slept.

Again, that night, he heard the battle outside, anguished, desperate. Again, at first light, he felt her curl against him and smelled the scorched dog. Again, when she woke, she tuned and beat the drum. The same song transported him. He put his hand to his head. She'd cut up her blanket, crowned him with a warm woollen turban. That night, he opened his eyes and saw the world rock to a halt. Joyously, he whispered, I am back. I have returned.

You shall go on one more journey with me, she said, smiling, and began to sing.

Her song lulled and relaxed him so that when he stepped out of his body he was not afraid to lift off the ground alongside her. They travelled into vast air. Over the dense woods, they flew so fast that no cold could reach them. Below them, fires burned, a village only two days' walk from their hut. Satisfied, she turned them back and Wolfred drifted down into the body that he would not leave again until he had completed half a century of bone-breaking work.

Two days later, they left the deep wilderness and entered a town. Ojibwe bark houses, a hundred or more, were set up along the lakeshore. On a street of beaten snow, several wooden houses were neatly rooted in an incongruous row. They were so like the houses that

Wolfred had left behind out East that, for a disoriented moment, he believed they had traversed the Great Lakes. He knocked at the door of the largest house. Not until he had introduced himself in English did the young woman who answered recognize him as a white man.

She and her husband, missionaries, brought the pair into a warm kitchen. They were given water and rags to wash with, and then a tasteless porridge of boiled wild rice. They were allowed to sleep with blankets, on the floor behind the woodstove. The dog, left outside, sniffed the missionaries' dog and followed it to the barn, where the two coupled in the steam of the cow's great body. The next morning, speaking earnestly to the girl, whose clean face was too beautiful to look at, Wolfred asked if she would marry him.

When you grow up, he said.

She smiled and nodded.

Again, he asked her name.

She laughed, not wanting him to own her, and drew a flower.

The missionary was sending a few young Ojibwe to a Presbyterian boarding school, in Michigan, that was for Indians only, and he offered to send the girl there, too, if she wanted to become educated. She agreed to do it.

At the school, everything was taken from her. Losing her mother's drum was like losing Mink all over again. At night, she asked the drum to fly back to her again. But there was no answer. She soon learned how to fall asleep. Or let the part of myself they call hateful fall asleep, she thought. But that was all of herself. Her whole being was Anishinaabe. She was Illusion. She was Mirage. *Omban-itemagad*. Or what they called her now—Indian. As in, Do not speak Indian, when she had been speaking her own language. It was hard to divide off parts of herself and let them go. At night, she flew up through the ceiling and soared as she had been taught. She stored pieces of her being in the tops of the trees. She'd retrieve them later, when the bells stopped. But the bells would never stop. There were so many bells. Her head ached, at first, because of the bells. My thoughts are all tangled up, she said out loud to herself, *inbiimiskwendam*. However, there was very little time to consider what was happening.

The other children smelled like old people. Soon she did, too. Her woollen dress and corset pinched, and the woollen underwear made her itch like mad. Her feet were shot through with pain, and stank from sweating in hard leather. Her hands chapped. She was always cold, but she was already used to that. The food was usually salt pork and cabbage, which cooked foul and turned the dormitory rank with farts, as did the milk they were forced to drink. But no matter how raw, or rotten, or strange, she had to eat, so she got used to it. It was hard to understand the teachers or say what she needed in their language, but she learned. The crying up and down the rows of beds at night kept her awake, but soon she cried and farted herself to sleep with everyone else.

She missed her mother, even though Mink had sold her. She missed Wolfred, the only person left for her. She kept his finely written letters. When she was weak or tired, she read them over. That he called her Flower made her uneasy. Girls were not named for flowers, as flowers died so quickly. Girls were named for deathless things—forms of light, forms of clouds, shapes of stars, that which appears and disappears like an island on the horizon. Sometimes the school seemed like a dream that could not be true, and she fell asleep hoping to wake in another world.

She never got used to the bells, but she got used to other children coming and going. They died of measles, scarlet fever, flu, diphtheria, tuberculosis, and other diseases that did not have a name. But she was already accustomed to everybody around her dying. Once, she got a fever and thought that she would also die. But in the night her pale-blue spirit came, sat on the bed, spoke to her kindly, and told her that she would live.

Nobody got drunk. Nobody slashed her mother's face and nose, ruining her. Nobody took a knife and stabbed an uncle who held her foot and died as the blood gushed from his mouth. Another good thing she thought of while the other children wept was that the journey to the school had been arduous and far. Much too far for a head to roll. ♦

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Louise Erdrich on "The Flower."

THE CRITICS



ON TELEVISION

TO SERVE MAN

The savory spectacle of "Hannibal."

BY EMILY NUSSBAUM

I stopped watching "Hannibal" in Season 1, after a corpse was carved into a cello, its vocal chords splayed like strings, then "played." I stopped watching again when Dr. Frederick Chilton, played by the redoubtable Raúl Esparza, got his guts tugged out of his abdomen, like red-sauced linguini, while he was still conscious. I stopped watching when an acupuncturist drove a needle through an eyeball, and again when a man's leg was roasted and fed to him. Each time, the decision felt like a sane and, maybe, ethical position. Enough nihilism, enough torture, I thought. Enough serial killers glamorized as artists and geniuses.

But that righteous high never lasted. I kept sneaking back, peeking through my fingers—a glimpse here, a binge there—either numbing myself or, depending on one's perspective, properly sensitizing myself. Gradually, my eyes adjusted to the darkness. By midway through Season 2, "Hannibal" felt less like a blood-soaked ordeal than like a macabre masterpiece, pure pleasure and audacity. With hints of David Cronenberg and Michael Mann, David Lynch and Stanley Kubrick, it has a formal ambition that is rare for television. It reflexively turns the ordinary into the alien and vice versa. Corpses pile onto a nightmarish totem pole; bees pour out of eye sockets; men swallow songbirds whole. Over time, patterns emerge, revealing an uneasy meditation on intimacy, the vulnerability of the human body, and the power of art—its ability to make us crave something we thought we'd find disgusting.

It's possible, of course, that I love the show because it confirms my worst suspicions about food culture. For those who haven't seen "The Silence of the Lambs" or read Thomas Harris's novels, from which the story is adapted, the basic plot is this: Hannibal Lecter, played with waxwork hauteur by Mads Mikkelsen, is a brilliant psychiatrist who commits hideous murders. He takes "trophies" from the bodies—a liver here, a heart there—then cooks and serves them to unwitting guests. (Most episodes feature dazzling cooking montages, notorious for making viewers hungry, then making them feel guilty.) His justification is that he "eats the rude," like David Chang, but with slightly less rigid ethical boundaries. Hannibal is quite a catch: he plays the harpsichord and the theremin, he's a natty dresser, and he knows his Dante. By day, he's a libertarian life coach for his patients' Jungian shadows, often manipulating lesser serial killers into covering his tracks—in this universe, as on "Dexter," serial killers are as common as daisies.

Hannibal's opposite number—his love interest, basically—is the tetchy, delicate Will Graham. Played by the sad-eyed Hugh Dancy, Will is a criminal profiler for the F.B.I. whose pathological empathy is far more crippling than Hannibal's lack of the stuff. When he visits a murder scene, he enters a fugue state and becomes the killer, imagining the crime while murmuring the show's mantra: "This is my design." The two men circle each other seductively—best friends

and homoerotic nemeses, client and therapist—each getting inside the other's head, sometimes literally. Last season ended with Hannibal gutting Will with a kitchen knife after stroking his cheek—a moment of symbolic penetration that sent the show's fans, self-proclaimed Fannibals, into raptures. This season, the third, Hannibal gave Will, who survived, a valentine: a man's corpse that he had pulverized, then sculpted into the shape of a human heart and displayed in a church, like a holy relic.

None of this is treated even mildly realistically, and yet it's not exactly camp, either. As the show's creator, Bryan Fuller (the wizard behind the dreamlike "Wonderfalls" and "Pushing Daisies"), has suggested, "Hannibal" is a show that regards spectacle with a sort of worship. When "Hannibal" began, it mimicked the structures of network cop procedurals, but the show has long since shed that carapace, not unlike the way Hannibal shrugs off what he calls his "person suit," the demeanor that lets him pass for normal. In a recent interview on RogerEbert.com, Fuller explained that, when he hires directors for the series, he tells them, "This is not an episode of television. This is a pretentious art film." His willingness to risk looking outré and avant-garde (on NBC, of all places!) is part of a larger trend on television, inflecting series that range from "American Horror Story" to "True Detective," "The Leftovers," "The Returned," "The Strain," and "The Knick." Some of these shows are better than others, but they all live and die by their devotion to that old Freudian concept of "the uncanny." Among that company, "Hannibal" stands out for its ability to risk absurdity and self-seriousness, only to emerge with something gloriously strange and profound, in the realm of opera and poetry. When Will examines that heart sculpture, for instance, it folds open, ventricles falling to the floor, and then walks toward him on twisted, black, nightmare legs, transforming into a demonic elk.

And, despite the gore, there's a disarming fairy-tale quality to the world of "Hannibal," in part because the murders, with few exceptions, lack the misogynistic underpinnings of real-life serial killings, or even the snappy kink of Harris's books. No one is raped on "Hannibal," even in a fantasy; instead, the victims get

ABOVE: GUIDO SCARABOTTOLLO



Reflexively turning the ordinary into the alien and vice versa, “Hannibal” has a formal ambition that is rare for television.

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AND IDEAS.

"If no longer vital to a woman's status as a human being, marriage is still understood as her crowning success, the event without which her life won't be truly complete."

—"Marriage Is an Abduction,"
Elif Batuman

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repurposed as mushroom farms. When female characters get hurt—whether they're shot or shoved out a window or, in one case, sliced finely, like garlic—there's little gendered sadism to the act. Graphic sexual violence isn't inevitably exploitative; sometimes it's a welcome force for realism. But, in the arms race of suffering on television, "Hannibal"'s elision works as a small, idealistic promise to viewers: while anything can happen, that one thing won't.

Murder, on the other hand, is up for grabs—and treated with brazen disrespect. On "Hannibal," corpses are fungible art supplies, like clay or oil paint, in sequences in which bodies are stitched into frescoes or twisted into grotesque displays. Skin is stretched into wings, corpses are bent into apiaries, belladonna is planted in heart cavities. It would be easy to see such choices through a cynical lens, as shock effects: Nietzsche is peachy, but sicker is quicker. It certainly makes the show a tough one to recommend to strangers. But these images coalesce into metaphors for mortality and loss. A teacup breaks and then comes back together; we see that it's like a skull shattering, which in turn reflects a grieving man's wish for time to go backward. Tears are stirred into Martinis. A woman's corpse is sewn into a horse's womb, and after she's cut out the doctors feel a heartbeat in her torso; they slice her open and a live blackbird flies out. Symbols overlap eerily, as senses do in synesthesia: a heartbeat is a clock tick is a drumbeat. The arch dialogue has the same multiplicity, with ordinary idioms taking on sinister resonance, from "the one that got away" to "the devil you know." "You smoked me in thyme," one victim remarks, as he's served a dish of himself, with typically shrewd double meaning.

In one of last season's most spectacular scenarios, a black male corpse is discovered in the river, coated in resin. The man had escaped from an art project built by a serial killer Hannibal had never met: he'd torn himself out of a mural comprising dozens of corpses, of varying skin tones—racial diversity reinterpreted as pigment, people reduced to brushstrokes. When Hannibal climbs a ladder to the top of a corn silo, he looks down and sees a pattern: from above,

the curled bodies form an eye. The image suggests outrageous ideas: one eye gazing at another, God at his creation, his creation back at God, through the open pupil of the building's roof. Hannibal calls down to the killer, "I love your work."

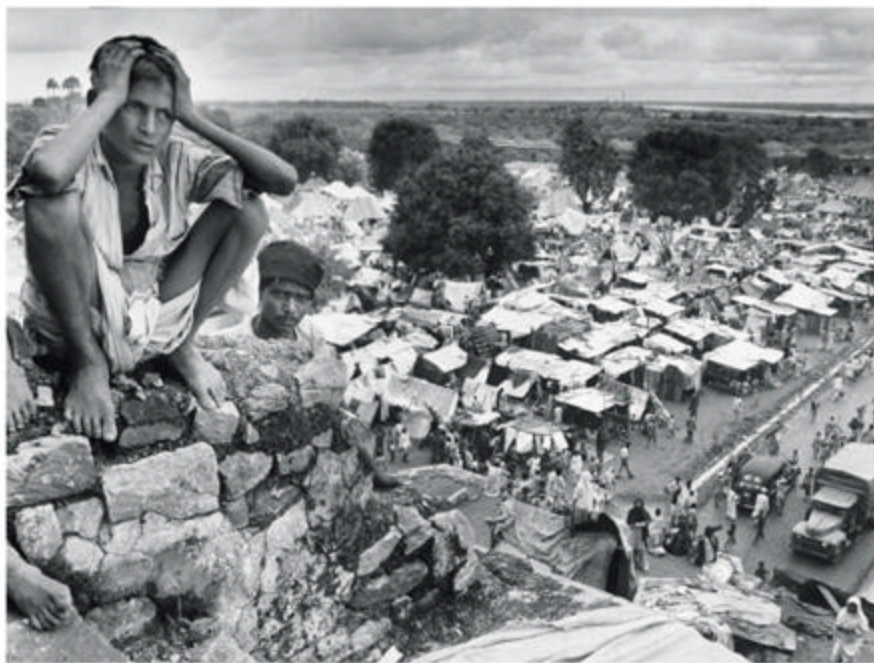
The scene was so outlandish that it made me laugh out loud. It also felt like a reminder of the show's own double consciousness about what it means to watch from a distance, to admit that we're voyeurs who enjoy foie gras and veal. (There are moments when one suspects the show is sponsored by PETA.) For anyone who watches modern television, Hannibal may seem familiar: he's another middle-aged male genius with a fetish for absolute control, like Don Draper and Walter White and Dr. House and Francis Underwood. Astrologically speaking, he's a Sherlock with Lucifer rising. But, mainly, Hannibal suggests the fantasy of the uncompromising television auteur: he's the perfectionist who cares only that every detail of his vision be realized, no matter what sacrifices that might require. This is his design.

As Season 3 begins, the show has entered a state of feverish theatricality, adding frame upon frame, underlining its own artificiality: in one flashback, Hannibal recites the magic words "Once upon a time," and a red velvet curtain fills the screen. A fugitive from justice, Hannibal has fled to Europe, where he's been riding motorcycles, sipping champagne, killing people in order to steal their curatorial positions, and posing as man and wife with his former therapist, Bedelia Du Maurier (the deliciously chilly Gillian Anderson, speaking so low that their scenes are like whisper contests). It's not entirely clear whether Bedelia is his hostage or his co-conspirator. "Observe or participate?" he asks, after he bludgeons a man with a bust of Aristotle in front of her. "Are you at this very moment observing or participating?" "Observing," she whispers, a tear streaking her face. It's one of many exchanges that seem designed to challenge the viewer's role but also to suggest that we should stop fooling ourselves. Bedelia doesn't hurt anyone, but she is too curious to look away. Like anyone who can't stop watching Hannibal, she's decided that what he offers is too good not to have a taste. ♦

THE GREAT DIVIDE

The violent legacy of Indian Partition.

BY WILLIAM DALRYMPLE



Partition displaced fifteen million people and killed more than a million.

In August, 1947, when, after three hundred years in India, the British finally left, the subcontinent was partitioned into two independent nation states: Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan. Immediately, there began one of the greatest migrations in human history, as millions of Muslims trekked to West and East Pakistan (the latter now known as Bangladesh) while millions of Hindus and Sikhs headed in the opposite direction. Many hundreds of thousands never made it.

Across the Indian subcontinent, communities that had coexisted for almost a millennium attacked each other in a terrifying outbreak of sectarian violence, with Hindus and Sikhs on one side and Muslims on the other—a mutual genocide as unexpected as it was unprecedented. In Punjab and Bengal—provinces abutting India's borders with West and East Pakistan, respectively—the carnage was especially intense, with massacres, arson, forced conversions, mass abductions, and savage sexual violence.

Some seventy-five thousand women were raped, and many of them were then disfigured or dismembered.

Nisid Hajari, in *"Midnight's Furies"* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt), his fast-paced new narrative history of Partition and its aftermath, writes, "Gangs of killers set whole villages aflame, hacking to death men and children and the aged while carrying off young women to be raped. Some British soldiers and journalists who had witnessed the Nazi death camps claimed Partition's brutalities were worse: pregnant women had their breasts cut off and babies hacked out of their bellies; infants were found literally roasted on spits."

By 1948, as the great migration drew to a close, more than fifteen million people had been uprooted, and between one and two million were dead. The comparison with the death camps is not so far-fetched as it may seem. Partition is central to modern identity in the Indian subcontinent, as the Holocaust is to identity among Jews, branded pain-

fully onto the regional consciousness by memories of almost unimaginable violence. The acclaimed Pakistani historian Ayesha Jalal has called Partition "the central historical event in twentieth century South Asia." She writes, "A defining moment that is neither beginning nor end, partition continues to influence how the peoples and states of postcolonial South Asia envisage their past, present and future."

After the Second World War, Britain simply no longer had the resources with which to control its greatest imperial asset, and its exit from India was messy, hasty, and clumsily improvised. From the vantage point of the retreating colonizers, however, it was in one way fairly successful. Whereas British rule in India had long been marked by violent revolts and brutal suppressions, the British Army was able to march out of the country with barely a shot fired and only seven casualties. Equally unexpected was the ferocity of the ensuing bloodbath.

The question of how India's deeply intermixed and profoundly syncretic culture unravelled so quickly has spawned a vast literature. The polarization of Hindus and Muslims occurred during just a couple of decades of the twentieth century, but by the middle of the century it was so complete that many on both sides believed that it was impossible for adherents of the two religions to live together peacefully. Recently, a spate of new work has challenged seventy years of nationalist mythmaking. There has also been a widespread attempt to record oral memories of Partition before the dwindling generation that experienced it takes its memories to the grave.

The first Islamic conquests of India happened in the eleventh century, with the capture of Lahore, in 1021. Persianized Turks from what is now central Afghanistan seized Delhi from its Hindu rulers in 1192. By 1323, they had established a sultanate as far south as Madurai, toward the tip of the peninsula, and there were other sultanates all the way from Gujarat, in the west, to Bengal, in the east.

Today, these conquests are usually perceived as having been made by "Muslims," but medieval Sanskrit inscriptions



"I'm kind of a big deal at my mom's house."

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don't identify the Central Asian invaders by that term. Instead, the newcomers are identified by linguistic and ethnic affiliation, most typically as Turushka—Turks—which suggests that they were not seen primarily in terms of their religious identity. Similarly, although the conquests themselves were marked by carnage and by the destruction of Hindu and Buddhist sites, India soon embraced and transformed the new arrivals. Within a few centuries, a hybrid Indo-Islamic civilization emerged, along with hybrid languages—notably Deccani and Urdu—which mixed the Sanskrit-derived vernaculars of India with Turkish, Persian, and Arabic words.

Eventually, around a fifth of South Asia's population came to identify itself as Muslim. The Sufi mystics associated with the spread of Islam often regarded the Hindu scriptures as divinely inspired. Some even took on the yogic practices of Hindu sadhus, rubbing their bodies with ashes, or hanging upside down

while praying. In village folk traditions, the practice of the two faiths came close to blending into one. Hindus would visit the graves of Sufi masters and Muslims would leave offerings at Hindu shrines. Sufis were especially numerous in Punjab and Bengal—the same regions that, centuries later, saw the worst of the violence—and there were mass conversions among the peasants there.

The cultural mixing took place throughout the subcontinent. In medieval Hindu texts from South India, the Sultan of Delhi is sometimes talked about as the incarnation of the god Vishnu. In the seventeenth century, the Mughal crown prince Dara Shikoh had the Bhagavad Gita, perhaps the central text of Hinduism, translated into Persian, and composed a study of Hinduism and Islam, "The Mingling of Two Oceans," which stressed the affinities of the two faiths. Not all Mughal rulers were so open-minded. The atrocities wrought by Dara's bigoted and puritan-

ical brother Aurangzeb have not been forgotten by Hindus. But the last Mughal emperor, enthroned in 1837, wrote that Hinduism and Islam "share the same essence," and his court lived out this ideal at every level.

In the nineteenth century, India was still a place where traditions, languages, and cultures cut across religious groupings, and where people did not define themselves primarily through their religious faith. A Sunni Muslim weaver from Bengal would have had far more in common in his language, his outlook, and his fondness for fish with one of his Hindu colleagues than he would with a Karachi Shia or a Pashtun Sufi from the North-West Frontier.

Many writers persuasively blame the British for the gradual erosion of these shared traditions. As Alex von Tunzelmann observes in her history "Indian Summer," when "the British started to define 'communities' based on religious identity and attach political representation to them, many Indians stopped accepting the diversity of their own thoughts and began to ask themselves in which of the boxes they belonged." Indeed, the British scholar Yasmin Khan, in her acclaimed history "The Great Partition," judges that Partition "stands testament to the follies of empire, which ruptures community evolution, distorts historical trajectories and forces violent state formation from societies that would otherwise have taken different—and unknowable—paths."

Other assessments, however, emphasize that Partition, far from emerging inevitably out of a policy of divide-and-rule, was largely a contingent development. As late as 1940, it might still have been avoided. Some earlier work, such as that of the British historian Patrick French, in "Liberty or Death," shows how much came down to a clash of personalities among the politicians of the period, particularly between Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the leader of the Muslim League, and Mohandas Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, the two most prominent leaders of the Hindu-dominated Congress Party. All three men were Anglicized lawyers who had received at least part of their education in England. Jinnah and Gandhi were both Gujarati. Potentially, they could have been close

allies. But by the early nineteen-forties their relationship had grown so poisonous that they could barely be persuaded to sit in the same room.

At the center of the debates lies the personality of Jinnah, the man most responsible for the creation of Pakistan. In Indian-nationalist accounts, he appears as the villain of the story; for Pakistanis, he is the Father of the Nation. As French points out, “Neither side seems especially keen to claim him as a real human being, the Pakistanis restricting him to an appearance on banknotes in demure Islamic costume.” One of the virtues of Hajari’s new history is its more balanced portrait of Jinnah. He was certainly a tough, determined negotiator and a chilly personality; the Congress Party politician Sarojini Naidu joked that she needed to put on a fur coat in his presence. Yet Jinnah was in many ways a surprising architect for the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. A staunch secularist, he drank whiskey, rarely went to a mosque, and was clean-shaven and stylish, favoring beautifully cut Savile Row suits and silk ties. Significantly, he chose to marry a non-Muslim woman, the glamorous daughter of a Parsi businessman. She was famous for her revealing saris and for once bringing her husband ham sandwiches on voting day.

Jinnah, far from wishing to introduce religion into South Asian politics, deeply resented the way Gandhi brought spiritual sensibilities into the political discussion, and once told him, as recorded by one colonial governor, that “it was a crime to mix up politics and religion the way he had done.” He believed that doing so emboldened religious chauvinists on all sides. Indeed, he had spent the early part of his political career, around the time of the First World War, striving to bring together the Muslim League and the Congress Party. “I say to my Musalman friends: Fear not!” he said, and he described the idea of Hindu domination as “a bogey, put before you by your enemies to frighten you, to scare you away from cooperation and unity, which are essential for the establishment of self-government.” In 1916, Jinnah, who, at the time, belonged to both parties, even succeeded in getting them to present the British with a common set of demands, the Lucknow Pact. He was hailed as “the Ambassador of Hindu-Muslim Unity.”

But Jinnah felt eclipsed by the rise of Gandhi and Nehru, after the First World War. In December, 1920, he was booed off a Congress Party stage when he insisted on calling his rival “Mr. Gandhi” rather than referring to him by his spiritual title, Mahatma—Great Soul. Throughout the nineteen-twenties and thirties, the mutual dislike grew, and by 1940 Jinnah had steered the Muslim League toward demanding a separate homeland for the Muslim minority of South Asia. This was a position that he had previously opposed, and, according to Hajari, he privately “reassured skeptical colleagues that Partition was only a bargaining chip.” Even after his demands for the creation of Pakistan were met, he insisted that his new country would guarantee freedom of religious expression. In August, 1947, in his first address to the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, he said, “You may belong to any religion, or caste, or creed—that has nothing to do with the business of the State.” But it was too late: by the time the speech was delivered, violence between Hindus and Muslims had spiralled beyond anyone’s ability to control it.

Hindus and Muslims had begun to turn on each other during the chaos unleashed by the Second World War. In 1942, as the Japanese seized Singapore and Rangoon and advanced rapidly through Burma toward India, the Congress Party began a campaign of civil disobedience, the Quit India Movement, and its leaders, including Gandhi and Nehru, were arrested. While they were in prison, Jinnah, who had billed himself as a loyal ally of the British, consolidated opinion behind him as the best protection of Muslim interests against Hindu dominance. By the time the war was over and the Congress Party leaders were released, Nehru thought that Jinnah represented “an obvious example of the utter lack of the civilised mind,” and Gandhi was calling him a “maniac” and “an evil genius.”

From that point on, violence on the streets between Hindus and Muslims began to escalate. People moved away from, or were forced out of, mixed neighborhoods and took refuge in increasingly polarized ghettos. Tensions were often heightened by local and regional



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political leaders. H.S. Suhrawardy, the ruthless Muslim League Chief Minister of Bengal, made incendiary speeches in Calcutta, provoking rioters against his own Hindu populace and writing in a newspaper that “bloodshed and disorder are not necessarily evil in themselves, if resorted to for a noble cause.”

The first series of widespread religious massacres took place in Calcutta, in 1946, partly as a result of Suhrawardy’s incitement. Von Tunzelmann’s history relays atrocities witnessed there by the writer Nirad C. Chaudhuri. Chaudhuri described a man tied to the connector box of the tramlines with a small hole drilled in his skull, so that he would bleed to death as slowly as possible. He also wrote about a Hindu mob stripping a fourteen-year-old boy naked to confirm that he was circumcised, and therefore Muslim. The boy was then thrown into a pond and held down with bamboo poles—“a Bengali engineer educated in England noting the time he took to die on his Rolex wristwatch, and wondering how tough the life of a Muslim bastard was.” Five thousand people were killed. The American photojournalist Margaret Bourke-White, who had witnessed the opening of the gates of a Nazi concentration camp a year earlier, wrote that Calcutta’s streets “looked like Buchenwald.”

As riots spread to other cities and the

number of casualties escalated, the leaders of the Congress Party, who had initially opposed Partition, began to see it as the only way to rid themselves of the troublesome Jinnah and his Muslim League. In a speech in April, 1947, Nehru said, “I want that those who stand as an obstacle in our way should go their own way.” Likewise, the British realized that they had lost any remaining vestiges of control and began to speed up their exit strategy. On the afternoon of February 20, 1947, the British Prime Minister, Clement Atlee, announced before Parliament that British rule would end on “a date not later than June, 1948.” If Nehru and Jinnah could be reconciled by then, power would be transferred to “some form of central Government for British India.” If not, they would hand over authority “in such other way as may seem most reasonable and in the best interests of the Indian people.”

In March, 1947, a glamorous minor royal named Lord Louis Mountbatten flew into Delhi as Britain’s final Viceroy, his mission to hand over power and get out of India as quickly as possible. A series of disastrous meetings with an intransigent Jinnah soon convinced him that the Muslim League leader was “a psychopathic case,” impervious to negotiation. Worried that,

if he didn’t move rapidly, Britain might, as Hajari writes, end up “refereeing a civil war,” Mountbatten deployed his considerable charm to persuade all the parties to agree to Partition as the only remaining option.

In early June, Mountbatten stunned everyone by announcing August 15, 1947, as the date for the transfer of power—ten months earlier than expected. The reasons for this haste are still the subject of debate, but it is probable that Mountbatten wanted to shock the quarrelling parties into realizing that they were hurtling toward a sectarian precipice. However, the rush only exacerbated the chaos. Cyril Radcliffe, a British judge assigned to draw the borders of the two new states, was given barely forty days to remake the map of South Asia. The borders were finally announced two days after India’s Independence.

None of the disputants were happy with the compromise that Mountbatten had forced on them. Jinnah, who had succeeded in creating a new country, regarded the truncated state he was given—a slice of India’s eastern and western extremities, separated by a thousand miles of Indian territory—as “a maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten” travesty of the land he had fought for. He warned that the partition of Punjab and Bengal “will be sowing the seeds of future serious trouble.”

On the evening of August 14, 1947, in the Viceroy’s House in New Delhi, Mountbatten and his wife settled down to watch a Bob Hope movie, “My Favorite Brunette.” A short distance away, at the bottom of Raisina Hill, in India’s Constituent Assembly, Nehru rose to his feet to make his most famous speech. “Long years ago, we made a tryst with destiny,” he declaimed. “At the stroke of the midnight hour, when the world sleeps, India will awake to life and freedom.”

But outside the well-guarded enclaves of New Delhi the horror was well under way. That same evening, as the remaining British officials in Lahore set off for the railway station, they had to pick their way through streets littered with dead bodies. On the platforms, they found the railway staff hosing down pools of blood. Hours earlier, a group of Hindus fleeing the city had been massacred by a Muslim mob as they sat



“These pills will cure your O.C.D., but first I wonder if you could organize my shelves.”

waiting for a train. As the Bombay Express pulled out of Lahore and began its journey south, the officials could see that Punjab was ablaze, with flames rising from village after village.

What followed, especially in Punjab, the principal center of the violence, was one of the great human tragedies of the twentieth century. As Nisid Hajari writes, “Foot caravans of destitute refugees fleeing the violence stretched for 50 miles and more. As the peasants trudged along wearily, mounted guerrillas burst out of the tall crops that lined the road and culled them like sheep. Special refugee trains, filled to bursting when they set out, suffered repeated ambushes along the way. All too often they crossed the border in funereal silence, blood seeping from under their carriage doors.”

Within a few months, the landscape of South Asia had changed irrevocably. In 1941, Karachi, designated the first capital of Pakistan, was 47.6 per cent Hindu. Delhi, the capital of independent India, was one-third Muslim. By the end of the decade, almost all the Hindus of Karachi had fled, while two hundred thousand Muslims had been forced out of Delhi. The changes made in a matter of months remain indelible seventy years later.

More than twenty years ago, I visited the novelist Ahmed Ali. Ali was the author of “Twilight in Delhi,” which was published, in 1940, with the support of Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster, and is probably still the finest novel written about the Indian capital. Ali had grown up in the mixed world of old Delhi, but by the time I visited him he was living in exile in Karachi. “The civilization of Delhi came into being through the mingling of two different cultures, Hindu and Muslim,” he told me. Now “Delhi is dead. . . . All that made Delhi special has been uprooted and dispersed.” He lamented especially the fact that the refinement of Delhi Urdu had been destroyed: “Now the language has shrunk. So many words are lost.”

Like Ali, the Bombay-based writer Saadat Hasan Manto saw the creation of Pakistan as both a personal and a communal disaster. The tragedy of Partition, he wrote, was not that there were now two countries instead of one but

the realization that “human beings in both countries were slaves, slaves of bigotry . . . slaves of religious passions, slaves of animal instincts and barbarity.” The madness he witnessed and the trauma he experienced in the process of leaving Bombay and emigrating to Lahore marked him for the rest of his life. Yet it also transformed him into the supreme master of the Urdu short story. Before Partition, Manto was an essayist, screenwriter, and journalist of varying artistic



attainment. Afterward, during several years of frenzied creativity, he became an author worthy of comparison with Chekhov, Zola, and Maupassant—all of whom he translated and adopted as models. Although his work is still little known outside South Asia, a number of fine new translations—by Aatish Taseer, Matt Reeck, and Aftab Ahmad—promise to bring him a wider audience.

As recently illuminated in Ayesha Jalal’s “The Pity of Partition”—Jalal is Manto’s great-niece—he was baffled by the logic of Partition. “Despite trying,” he wrote, “I could not separate India from Pakistan, and Pakistan from India.” Who, he asked, owned the literature that had been written in undivided India? Although he faced criticism and censorship, he wrote obsessively about the sexual violence that accompanied Partition. “When I think of the recovered women, I think only of their bloated bellies—what will happen to those bellies?” he asked. Would the children so conceived “belong to Pakistan or Hindustan?”

The most extraordinary feature of Manto’s writing is that, for all his feeling, he never judges. Instead, he urges us to try to understand what is going on in the minds of all his characters, the murderers as well as the murdered, the rapists as well as the raped. In the short story “Colder Than Ice,” we enter the bedroom of Ishwar Singh, a Sikh murderer and rapist, who has suffered from impotence ever since his abduction of a beautiful Muslim girl. As he tries to ex-

plain his affliction to Kalwant Kaur, his current lover, he tells the story of discovering the girl after breaking into a house and killing her family:

“I could have slashed her throat, but I didn’t. . . . I thought she had gone into a faint, so I carried her over my shoulder all the way to the canal which runs outside the city. . . . Then I laid her down on the grass, behind some bushes and. . . first I thought I would shuffle her a bit. . . . but then I decided to trump her right away. . . .”

“What happened?” she asked.

“I threw the trump. . . but, but. . .”

His voice sank.

Kalwant Kaur shook him violently. “What happened?”

Ishwar Singh opened his eyes. “She was dead. . . . I had carried a dead body. . . a heap of cold flesh. . . jani, [my beloved] give me your hand.”

Kalwant Kaur placed her hand on his. It was colder than ice.

Manto’s most celebrated Partition story, “Toba Tek Singh,” proceeds from a simple premise, laid out in the opening lines:

Two or three years after the 1947 Partition, it occurred to the governments of India and Pakistan to exchange their lunatics in the same manner as they had exchanged their criminals. The Muslim lunatics in India were to be sent over to Pakistan and the Hindu and Sikh lunatics in Pakistani asylums were to be handed over to India.

It was difficult to say whether the proposal made any sense or not. However, the decision had been taken at the topmost level on both sides.

In a few thousand darkly satirical words, Manto manages to convey that the lunatics are much saner than those making the decision for their removal, and that, as Jalal puts it, “the madness of Partition was far greater than the insanity of all the inmates put together.” The tale ends with the eponymous hero stranded between the two borders: “On one side, behind barbed wire, stood together the lunatics of India and on the other side, behind more barbed wire, stood the lunatics of Pakistan. In between, on a bit of earth which had no name, lay Toba Tek Singh.”

Manto’s life after Partition forms a tragic parallel with the institutional insanity depicted in “Toba Tek Singh.” Far from being welcomed in Pakistan, he was disowned as reactionary by its Marxist-leaning literary set. After the publication of “Colder Than Ice,” he was charged with obscenity and sentenced to prison with hard labor, although he was acquitted on appeal. The need to earn a



"Wait, what if we convinced the jury that, while they're wasting their time with me, the real Socrates is still at large?"

living forced Manto into a state of hyper-productivity; for a period in 1951, he was writing a book a month, at the rate of one story a day. Under this stress, he fell into a depression and became an alcoholic. His family had him committed to a mental asylum in an attempt to curb his drinking, but he died of its effects in 1955, at the age of forty-two.

For all the elements of tragic farce in Manto's stories, and the tormented state of mind of Manto himself, the reality of Partition was no less filled with absurdity. Vazira Zamindar's excellent recent study, "The Long Partition and the Making of Modern South Asia," opens with an account of Ghulam Ali, a Muslim from Lucknow, a city in central North India, who specialized in making artificial limbs. He opted to live in India, but at the moment when Partition was announced he happened to be at a military workshop on the Pakistan side of the border. Within months, the two new countries were at war over Kashmir, and Ali was pressed into service by the Pakistani Army and prevented from returning to his home, in India. In 1950, the Army discharged him on the ground that he had become a citizen of India.

Yet when he got to the frontier he was not recognized as Indian, and was arrested for entering without a travel permit. In 1951, after serving a prison sentence in India, he was deported back to Pakistan. Six years later, he was still being deported back and forth, shuttling between the prisons and refugee camps of the two new states. His official file closes with the Muslim soldier under arrest in a camp for Hindu prisoners on the Pakistani side of the border.

Ever since 1947, India and Pakistan have nourished a deep-rooted mutual antipathy. They have fought two inconclusive wars over the disputed region of Kashmir—the only Muslim-majority area to remain within India. In 1971, they fought over the secession of East Pakistan, which became Bangladesh. In 1999, after Pakistani troops crossed into an area of Kashmir called Kargil, the two countries came alarmingly close to a nuclear exchange. Despite periodic gestures toward peace negotiations and moments of rapprochement, the Indo-Pak conflict remains the dominant geopolitical reality of the region. In Kashmir, a prolonged insur-

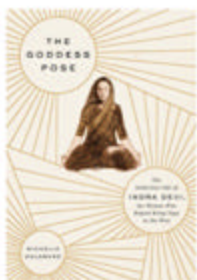
gency against Indian rule has left thousands dead and still gives rise to intermittent violence. Meanwhile, in Pakistan, where half the female population remains illiterate, defense eats up a fifth of the budget, dwarfing the money available for health, education, infrastructure, and development.

It is easy to understand why Pakistan might feel insecure: India's population, its defense budget, and its economy are seven times as large as Pakistan's. But the route that Pakistan has taken to defend itself against Indian demographic and military superiority has been disastrous for both countries. For more than thirty years, Pakistan's Army and its secret service, the I.S.I., have relied on jihadi proxies to carry out their aims. These groups have been creating as much—if not more—trouble for Pakistan as they have for the neighbors the I.S.I. hopes to undermine: Afghanistan and India.

Today, both India and Pakistan remain crippled by the narratives built around memories of the crimes of Partition, as politicians (particularly in India) and the military (particularly in Pakistan) continue to stoke the hatreds of 1947 for their own ends. Nisid Hajari ends his book by pointing out that the rivalry between India and Pakistan "is getting more, rather than less, dangerous: the two countries' nuclear arsenals are growing, militant groups are becoming more capable, and rabid media outlets on both sides are shrinking the scope for moderate voices." Moreover, Pakistan, nuclear-armed and deeply unstable, is not a threat only to India; it is now the world's problem, the epicenter of many of today's most alarming security risks. It was out of madrassas in Pakistan that the Taliban emerged. That regime, which was then the most retrograde in modern Islamic history, provided sanctuary to Al Qaeda's leadership even after 9/11.

It is difficult to disagree with Hajari's conclusion: "It is well past time that the heirs to Nehru and Jinnah finally put 1947's furies to rest." But the current picture is not encouraging. In Delhi, a hardline right-wing government rejects dialogue with Islamabad. Both countries find themselves more vulnerable than ever to religious extremism. In a sense, 1947 has yet to come to an end. ♦

BRIEFLY NOTED



THE GODDESS POSE, by *Michelle Goldberg (Knopf)*. “Traditional yoga is supposed to teach you how to renounce worldly goals,” Goldberg writes in this event-crammed biography. Yet for her subject, Indira Devi, yoga was about ambition. Born Eugenia Vassilievna, in 1899, she was a Latvian actress and socialite, who flitted through various jobs and countries before introducing yoga, still little known in the United States, in Los Angeles in the late forties. Greta Garbo and Gloria Swanson were among the clients at her studio, on Sunset Strip. The second half of Devi’s life, similarly fast-paced, included stints in Saigon, Mexico, and Buenos Aires. She lived to be a hundred and two.



IRREPRESSIBLE, by *Emily Bingham (Farrar, Straus & Giroux)*. Henrietta Bingham, the great-aunt of the author of this haunting biography, is best remembered for her association with the Bloomsbury group. A wealthy, charismatic lesbian débutante from Kentucky, she traipsed about London singing to a mandolin and seducing everyone she met (she was Dora Carrington’s longtime lover). Yet, Bingham writes, she always felt like an outsider. As the Jazz Age gave way to a harsher moral climate, she sought a cure for her orientation: years of psychoanalysis, electroshock therapy, barbiturates, and the threat of a lobotomy ushered in a tragic demise. Bingham captures both the giddy rebellion of her aunt’s youth and her slow, startling unravelling.



I REFUSE, by *Per Petterson, translated from the Norwegian by Don Bartlett (Graywolf)*. Set in Norway and covering half a century, this novel follows three childhood friends—Tommy, Jim, and Tommy’s younger sister, Siri—from adolescent trauma to the reckonings of middle age. Drinking, arson, a suicide attempt, and unsettled relationships all appear as fallout from an early confrontation between Tommy and his violent father. Characters take turns narrating, in a way that lends their struggles great immediacy, though Petterson’s choice of an episodic and nonlinear form muffles our sense of their development. Striking moments of reflection, as when Tommy and Jim travel or take in a gorgeously described landscape, bring agony to the forefront.



THE SYMPATHIZER, by *Viet Thanh Nguyen (Grove)*. This comic picaresque set in nineteen-seventies California is narrated by a Vietcong mole who has allowed himself to be groomed by the C.I.A.—to the point where the Vietnamese Communists no longer recognize this Beatles-loving person as one of their own. The novel’s best parts are painful, hilarious exposures of white tone-deafness, from an Oriental-studies professor who calls his Japanese-American secretary “Miss Butterfly” to a buffoonish Hollywood director—inspired, Nguyen’s acknowledgments note, by Francis Ford Coppola—who hires the narrator as a consultant for a cumbersome melodrama. The ending, which involves scenes of torture and a dystopian epiphany, feels out of keeping with the rest of the book, but the preceding satire is delicious.

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MR. POPULAR

Sam Hunt's music is radio-friendly. But is it country?

BY KELEFA SANNEH



Every spring, the University of Alabama at Birmingham hosts a concert by its gospel choir, a student group that is also an academic elective. (Participants earn an hour of class credit for each year of singing.) The 2008 concert featured a new spiritual, “Nothing Goes Unnoticed,” that paid tribute to the victims of the massacre at Virginia Tech, in 2007; audience members were given glow sticks so they could wave along. To perform it, the choir brought out an unlikely soloist: a shaggy-haired white guy in khakis and cowboy boots, who strummed an acoustic guitar and delivered the lyrics in a quavering twang. The singer was a celebrity, but not a musical

one: Sam Hunt, known to the student body as the starting quarterback on the football team. And he sounded pretty good. A video recording of the concert shows him growing more self-assured as the song progresses—buoyed, no doubt, by the dozens of gospel singers behind him and by the hundreds of glow sticks before him.

After college, Hunt earned a tryout with the Kansas City Chiefs, who evidently were not looking for a singer. So he moved to Nashville, where he fared better, helping to write hits for country stars like Kenny Chesney and Keith Urban. The song he co-wrote for Urban was “Cop Car,” about a teen-

age trespasser who shares a stolen moment with his co-conspirator: “I fell in love in the back of the cop car.” Last year, Urban sang it at the Grammy Awards—a triumphant moment for Hunt, you might think, but he didn’t see it that way. In a memorable breach of Nashville decorum, he responded to the performance with a doleful tweet:

I worked hard on “Cop Car.” Everything I poured into that song was stolen from me. I unfortunately can’t celebrate it being on the Grammys.

Hunt didn’t explain how he lost control of “Cop Car,” but he did find a way to retaliate: by re-recording it for his debut album, “Montevallo,” which was named after a town in Alabama where a former girlfriend lived, and which has established him as the fastest-rising new country star in years. The album, released last fall, is already responsible for two No. 1 hits on Billboard’s country chart, and its success has made his summer touring plans seem unreasonably modest. During a recent appearance at Jones Beach, on Long Island, booked long ago, he was the opening act for the opening act, which led to an unusual sight: an enthusiastic sing-along in a half-empty amphitheatre. Hunt wore a baseball cap and a gray T-shirt, snug enough to reassure fans that he could probably still heave a football deep into the secondary if the need arose. When he brought his wireless microphone into the crowd, he was swarmed by a throng of admirers, who were young, with few exceptions, and female, with none. He accepted the adulation with the unsheepish good cheer you might expect from a former jock—a guy whose popularity long predated his singing career.

Hunt grew up in Cedartown, Georgia, about an hour from Atlanta, and he has cited the city’s fertile R. & B. scene as an early influence. Back in his songwriter days, he released an independent album, “Between the Pines.” He called it an “acoustic mixtape,” and the casual performances—some of which seemed to have been recorded in bars, or maybe at house parties—showed off Hunt’s love of quick, syncopated vocal rhythms. Seven of those songs reappear on “Montevallo,” which is Nashville-slick, but with a light touch. “Make You Miss Me”—as in “Girl, I’m gonna”—is a breakup song with lyrics

Hunt sings vividly of small-town life, and also borrows from Beyoncé and Drake.

that might sound resentful if they were set to a less wistful tune, or if they were delivered by a singer less willing to play the lovestruck loser. And in “Take Your Time,” a No. 1 hit this spring, Hunt begins each verse by speaking the lyrics instead of singing them—a technique that owes as much to old-school country-music talkers like Tex Williams and Conway Twitty as it does to contemporary hip-hop stars. Hunt is the latest in a string of hunky young singers who have populated country-radio playlists in recent years. Their convivial and flirtatious songs are sometimes called “bro-country,” a description invariably wielded as an insult, and not always fairly. But if Hunt is a bro he is a sensitive one, honing an imaginative and inclusive sound that may well take him beyond the bros—and possibly beyond country, too.

At Jones Beach, Hunt was accompanied by a couple of guitarists and a drummer, as well as by a pre-recorded backing track, which nudged his songs toward traditional country music (by adding a banjo lick, say) or toward pop (whooshing keyboards). He is not a particularly strong singer, which doesn't have to be a disadvantage, especially for a performer whose lyrics tend toward the conversational. The goal is to encourage your fans to join their voices with yours, instead of marvelling at your high notes. He started his set with “Raised on It,” which builds to some rousing oh-oh-ohs, but finds time along the way to describe small-town life in a way that is both specific and widely applicable: “Duckin’ from your ex at the four-way stop/Turn the music down when you’re passing the cops.”

The sing-along stopped only once during Hunt's set, near the end, in a moment designed to disorient the crowd. A sinuous, hazy electronic beat came through the speakers, and a disembodied voice intoned some surprisingly gloomy words: “All the sh—I do is boring/All these record labels boring/I don't trust these record labels, I'm touring/All these people on the planet working nine to five, just to stay alive.” Some people in the crowd might have recognized the absent singer as Beyoncé, but probably not too many, since the clip came, lightly censored, from “Ghost,” one of the more exper-

imental songs on her self-titled 2013 album. This was Hunt's way of introducing “Single for the Summer,” a not wholly celebratory song about a man who finds himself seasonally unable to stay faithful. “I feel it creepin’ in,” he sang. “Every day's a weekend, and I'm drowning in the freedom.” After the second chorus, he took another detour, delivering part of the third verse of “Marvin's Room,” by Drake, another singer (and, more often, rapper) who elegantly slips between genres and moods; modern country singers love to flaunt phrases and attitudes borrowed from hip-hop, but Hunt's borrowings are softer and sneakier. “Having a hard time adjusting to fame,” he murmured, following Drake's example. It was the most memorable line of the night, even though he gave the crowd no reason to believe it.

Hunt's pop sensibility may remind some listeners of another singer who released an album on the day that “Montevallo” came out: Taylor Swift. The album, “1989,” was a preordained blockbuster that presented country radio stations with a dilemma: whether or not to play it. Swift might be the biggest star the genre has ever produced, but the songs on “1989” make no concessions to the sounds and subjects that define country music. When the first single was released, a program director from Minneapolis suggested to *USA Today* that Swift had abandoned the genre. “I hope she gets the country muse again soon,” he said. “We'll gladly welcome her back, whenever it is.” But some country stations have been playing songs from “1989” anyway, wagering that Swift's popularity will outweigh the disappointment of listeners who expect something twangier.

Among those stations is Nash FM, in New York, one of four hundred and sixty stations owned by Cumulus Media. John Dickey is the company's executive vice-president of content and programming, and he says that, especially in a cosmopolitan market like New York, it didn't make sense to send Swift's fans elsewhere simply because her new songs were too pop. In his view, country radio can and must expand musically, while retaining its

“foundational tenets,” including a commitment to “wholesome entertainment” for families. Hunt, unlike some country mavericks, has been embraced by radio stations, which remain the genre's most important arbiters. “What would have been a very difficult business proposition five, six, seven years ago with an artist like Sam Hunt—today, he's a poster child for what's right with the format,” Dickey says. “He's such a force right now, we can't get enough Sam Hunt on the radio.”

Last month, a country-radio consultant named Keith Hill earned himself scores of enemies by telling *Country Aircheck*, an industry magazine, that programmers should be careful not to play too many women singers. “If you want to make ratings in country radio, take females out,” he said, suggesting that records by women should make up no more than nineteen per cent of a station's playlist. (He explained, rather cryptically, that men were “the lettuce in our salad,” and that women were the tomatoes.) “Women like male artists,” he said, adding that as many as three-quarters of listeners are women. Artists and executives alike were quick to disavow Hill's analysis; Dickey, for instance, says that in order for country radio to thrive the number of women singers on the air must grow.

Part of the fun of a radio-driven genre like mainstream country is watching executives scramble to give audiences what they seem to want. For a few years, that meant bro-country, which could prosper only as long as listeners, especially women listeners, appeared to love it. But this past December a new duo called Maddie & Tae topped Billboard's country-airplay chart with “Girl in a Country Song,” an acerbic response to the bros. The lyrics mocked songs about generic women in bikinis, asking, “Being the girl in a country song/How in the world did it go so wrong?” In a subtler way, Hunt's ascendance, too, is proof that Nashville is changing again, as it always does. At Jones Beach, he ended his set with “Break Up in a Small Town,” a wounded pop song about a guy who can't avoid his ex-girlfriend. “You gotta move or move on,” Hunt sang: advice to a character who's stuck, from a singer who isn't. ♦

TRUE LIES

David Mamet and the art of the con.

BY HILTON ALS



Illusions generated a lot of talk in postwar American theatre. The truth is that no amount of reality could compete with the Holocaust. So there was a turning inward. In 1947, Tennessee Williams's Blanche DuBois told audiences that she wanted not realism but "magic," and that emotional honesty wasn't necessarily synonymous with the truth. Six years later, in Arthur Miller's "The Crucible," a play inspired by the hysteria of the McCarthy era, a young girl's fears and neuroses turned reality into fantasy, a weapon of suspicion and dread. When Mart Crowley's "The Boys in the Band" opened Off Broadway, in 1968, it raised the curtain on certain aspects of gay male life, but it

also showed that self-acceptance was still an illusion for gay people, who had spent too long struggling to breathe in the swamps of hatred and self-hatred.

Since the nineteen-seventies, David Mamet has been writing comedies and dramas in which illusion is less a subject than a quality of speech and character. Raised in Chicago during the Cold War, Mamet was still a young man when Saigon fell, in 1975. He grew up in a world defined by disassociation and violence, and many of his most interesting characters are con artists, who have no compunctions when it comes to doing what they have to do in order to survive and amass more—of anything, including

dreams. They live by one fierce rule: fuck the other guy before he fucks you. By the time the scam-thick "Glengarry Glen Ross" premiered, in 1983, he had become the bard of the American *get*. His small-time crooks, hucksters, and real-estate agents were extreme or broken manifestations of Aristotle's rule about what makes a play a play. In a 1997 interview in *The Paris Review*, Mamet said:

The main question in drama, the way I was taught, is always what does the protagonist want. . . . Do we see the protagonist's wishes fulfilled or absolutely frustrated? That's the structure of drama. . . . People only speak to get something. . . . They may use a language that *seems* revealing, but if so, it's just coincidence, because what they're trying to do is accomplish an objective.

Mamet's characters set up a con whenever there's something to be had, even if it's only a person's innocence—an innocence that the con artist rejects, because why should anyone get off the hook of existence without his fair share of existential disappointment? In "Edmond" (1982), the mild-mannered title character confronts and is beaten by a crooked card dealer and his skill. Being brutalized frees Edmond to pursue his own bloodlust; he comes to feel that politeness is for chumps and violence is justifiable—just as John, the professor accused of sexual harassment in Mamet's 1992 piece "Oleanna," learns that brute force might even be what his tormentor is looking for, in place of all that unmanly talking and thinking.

Like Saul Bellow's Augie March, Mamet's fast-talking guys are shysters in their own minds. They make conversations out of lists—of so-called facts or mundane details—and stories that never add up to anything, or come to an end, because liars and hysterics don't know who they are unless they've got an audience. Like writers, they want to convince you by telling you the only story they think needs telling. "Prairie du Chien," from 1979 (now in revival at the Atlantic Theatre Company, along with Mamet's 1985 short play "The Shawl," under the collective title "Ghost Stories"), stars a character who is called, simply, or not simply, Storyteller. The play opens in a train compartment. It's 1910. The lights are low, and the locomotive is chugging west through Wisconsin. Stage left, two men sit at a table playing cards: the Card Dealer (Nate Dendy) and the Gin Player (Jim Frangione). Upstage right,

Arliss Howard and Mary McCann as psychic and client in Mamet's "The Shawl."

the Storyteller (Jordan Lage) is talking to the Listener (Jason Ritter). The Listener has his back to us; his son (Henry Kelemen) isn't visible, either—for most of the thirty-minute piece, he's asleep on a bench beside the Listener. Originally written for the radio, "Prairie du Chien" is, first and foremost, a play about voices, but then what Mamet play isn't? Or isn't, ultimately, about Mamet's voice? Still, the look of the show is as important as what's being said, and the scenic designer, Lauren Helpm, and the lighting designer, Jeff Croiter, have built a world in which the physical limitations weigh on us as heavily as the words.

The Storyteller, who is thin-framed and handsome—he looks like an exhalation of mentholated cigarette smoke—is a monologist, more or less, and the tale he tells is strange, racial, and sexual. It involves a white couple who owned a farm and ran a store in Council Bluffs and had troubles. (The Storyteller never tells us what he does for a living, but it sounds like he is a travelling salesman.) One day in March, the wife—very pretty, kind-seeming—showed up in town with bruises on her hands. Her husband was jealous. The couple had words. Returning to the store in August, the Storyteller discovered the husband on his way to the farm to kill his wife, who he said was pregnant with someone else's child. The Storyteller tried to stop the guy, but he knocked the Storyteller down and ran off. The Storyteller found the sheriff and they raced out to the farm. Then things got really weird. Not only was the barn burning but the farmer was hanging from a porch crossbeam, dead. Inside the house, a woman was crying; she told them to go to the burning barn, where they found a black man with a pitchfork stuck in his heart. "It was sickening," the Storyteller says. "Five feet away there was the woman. In this lovely dress. This red dress. On her face. Her back was blown away. . . . And the barn's about to go." But that's not the end of the tale. Meeting the sheriff outside the barn, the Storyteller described what he'd seen. The sheriff argued that it wasn't possible: the woman in the red dress was in the house, alive.

The Storyteller doesn't impersonate the characters in his gothic tale. Instead, before each character speaks, he pauses for a moment, though not long enough to break the spell. But why is he weav-

ing a spell, and out of such unpleasant material? When the Gin Player discovers that the Card Dealer has been cheating, he pulls a gun, the eerie calm of the scene explodes, and so do we—with questions. Is the Storyteller part of the Dealer's con? Or is the Dealer working with the Listener? When the train stops in the prairie, the Dealer exits, and the Storyteller decides to stretch his legs. But first he asks, as he does at the beginning of the play, if the Listener's son is asleep, saying, "I'd give a lot to sleep like that." Perhaps the Storyteller, if he's complicit in the Dealer's con, feels guilt or remorse about how he makes a living. Or perhaps he just knows that the quickest way into any mark's heart is to express concern for his child. Or is the child, too, part of the con? Presumed innocents are anything but. It's all just another illusion.

Unlike Blanche DuBois, Mamet's characters aren't looking for magic. They're looking to disabuse others of the ridiculous desire to believe in a trusting, loving world. Miss A (the always compelling Mary McCann), in "The Shawl" (which, like "Prairie du Chien," is directed, with commitment, by Scott Zigler), is a lonely figure, who lives in her memories of childhood. To find out who she was—and what she might be—she visits a psychic named John (Arliss Howard) in his shuttered apartment. John sports a gray ponytail; his hands make little florid gestures whenever he gets excited about anything. He knows that Miss A is an unloved person; he can get to her—and to her money—by making her believe that he will be a kind of friend to her. (In order to get to her money herself, Miss A has to contest her mother's will.) John also longs for companionship. He expresses his love for Charles (Jason Ritter) by revealing his secrets to him. No one is "psychic," John explains. His insight into Miss A's past life has everything to do with guesswork. For instance, she's right-handed, right? When right-handed people fall, he says, they often break the fall with their left knee. So he guesses that Miss A has a scar on her left knee—and she does.

"The Shawl" is a portrait of exploitation and of how the con can become one's identity. Con artists feel lonely, or lonelier, without it. Will Charles love John if he lets him in on how he conducts his

business? Will Miss A trust John if he keeps getting her story right? (And will that trust lead to much-needed funds?) Eventually, Miss A confronts John with at least one truth: the photo she showed him on one visit wasn't actually of her mother; she cut it out of a book. How could he be fooled like that? John can't answer the question properly; in any case, he doesn't have to. He draws Miss A back in with a vision of her mother wrapping her in a shawl, a moment of maternal tenderness that Miss A never forgot and never mentioned to anyone. How did John know about it? He can't explain his insight, but it's enough for Miss A to believe that, because he knows her past, he knows her. Miss A needs to believe in John, just as John must believe in the con in order to keep her enthralled in his world of illusions. Toward the end of the play, there's this tense exchange:

MISS A: You *saw* her.
JOHN: *Did* I see her? . . .
MISS A: No. You must *tell* me. You *must* tell me. You *saw* her.
JOHN: Yes.
MISS A: You saw her wrap me in that shawl.
JOHN: Yes.
MISS A: And you say I *lost* it.
JOHN: You, yes, that is what I said. But you did *not* lose it. You *burnt* it. In rage. Standing somewhere by water, five years ago.
MISS A: Yes. And then I . . . ?
JOHN: I do not know. That is all I saw.

Italics are used to emphasize a point, and one of the points Mamet is making here is, again, about storytelling: Miss A, a kind of storyteller herself, wants to know what happened next. Was it this or that? Miss A and John are a grift-driven Mike Nichols and Elaine May, improvising the truth in ways that suit their shared, false spiritual awareness. In the end, we don't know if Miss A stands to inherit any money, or if the lure of cash is just her way of keeping John interested. John and Miss A are victimized by their loneliness, and they want to victimize other people because of it.

These dense and elegant plays are exemplary not only of Mamet's protean talent but of what can happen to you if you expect some kind of Aristotelian payoff—the usual Western dramatic con—before you leave the theatre. Neither play ends with a catharsis, and, by refusing us a satisfying release, Mamet turns us sideways and inward to look at his savage world view, in which the hunter becomes the game. ♦

HEAD TRIPS

"Inside Out" and "Escobar: Paradise Lost."

BY ANTHONY LANE

*Anger, Fear, Joy, Disgust, and Sadness co-star in Pete Docter's new film for Pixar.*

The new Pixar film, "Inside Out," is about the life of Riley. She is an only child (voiced by Kaitlyn Dias) who, aged eleven, moves with her parents (Diane Lane and Kyle MacLachlan) from Minnesota to San Francisco. Not much happens: she attends a new school, tries out for the hockey team, and misses her old home. That's it. No talking cars or robots are involved, and there's not a superhero in sight. The bulk of the movie takes place *out* of sight, within the confines of Riley's mind, where primary feelings affect her every move. There are five in all: Joy (Amy Poehler), who is butter-yellow and fuzzy at the edges; Anger (Lewis Black), who looks like SpongeBob soaked in blood; Fear (Bill Hader), a writhing dweeb with a bow tie; Disgust (Mindy Kaling), who has frosted green hair and lashes; and Sadness (Phyllis Smith), a bespectacled blob of blue. Now and then, they contend for supremacy, but mostly they join forces and react to the world beyond. They behold it through Riley's eyes, from a spiffy control center, like Kirk, Spock, and the gang on the bridge of the Enterprise.

Joy and the others are not alone.

Around them stretches the vast landscape of Riley's consciousness, with a train of thought puffing through it at irregular intervals, and other characters wandering about, such as Bing Bong (Richard Kind), an imaginary friend from Riley's past, who weeps candies, and an imaginary, floppy-haired boyfriend from her future ("I would *die* for Riley," he says). Dreams are produced in—where else?—a dream factory, with soundstages and camera crews. It closes down when she wakes. Experiences are delivered to the control room as if they were bowling balls, colored according to their mood; some are stored away, others dropped into a pit of forgetfulness, where they darken and crumble like spent coals, and a few are enthroned as core memories. And that, we are told, is how a personality is made.

So brisk is the defining of all this, and so efficiently does the director, Pete Docter, give us the guided tour, that we barely pause to consider the assumptions behind it. Pixar, though part of Disney, has no time for old-school habits, like lodging the emotions in the heart: a superfluous organ, it would

seem. They are located squarely in the brain, presumably displacing Reason, whom we never meet, but whom I picture as French, bald, and wearing an English suit. The presence of Disgust—rather than Boredom, say, or a bristling Envy (which Riley would certainly need if she had a sibling)—points to a fastidiousness that has typified Pixar from the start. Joy is very much the captain of the team, but, as events unfold, Sadness comes to the fore, demonstrating that it's O.K., and maybe even helpful, to feel low. Neurologists and therapists will examine the movie and pronounce themselves largely satisfied. Has the studio ever supplied a more intensely American product, or one more gayed to the anxieties of middle-class aspiration? Five great islands dominate Riley's psyche: Family, Honesty, Friendship, Hockey, and Goofball, better known as messing around. Each is vulnerable to threat; when Riley borrows her mom's credit card without asking, the isle of Honesty flakes away. Riley also detests her new house, which looks like a perfectly nice property in a safe neighborhood, and she and her parents are mightily vexed by the late arrival of their stuff in the moving van. A similar vehicle, remember, figured in the climax of "Toy Story," another tale of a childhood defined by its belongings. So much to worry about, in such an easy life!

On the scale of inventiveness, "Inside Out" will be hard to top this year. As so often with Pixar, you feel that you are visiting a laboratory crossed with a rainbow. Even through the graying veil of 3-D glasses, the sheen of the image is so acute that it aches, and the movie, aglow with domestic yearnings, should act upon viewers as "Meet Me in St. Louis" did in 1944. But who will those viewers be? And might they miss the clearer and less exhausting narrative flow of "Toy Story"? I saw Docter's film with a sizable crowd, and noticed a definite rustle of impatience among the smaller kids during the more outré scenes—like the journey that Joy and her pals take through Abstract Thought, which flattens them first to 2-D geometric forms and then to mere lines. They emerge as random stars, as if in a Miró painting, before popping back into shape. Pixar's vision of conceptual activity, in short, is a trip, and it

sticks out like Dali's dream sequences for Hitchcock's "Spellbound." I sensed, at such moments, that I was following the transcription, by very clever adults, of their own theorizing—literate, frantic, and endlessly chewed over—on the subject of human development, rather than the story of a growing girl.

That is why the biggest laughs, without exception, come when we exit Riley's head and take a quick vacation to the crania—and the mania—of others. During an argument at dinner, for instance, her father's emotions are miles away; *all* of them are watching a hockey game. And, as the closing credits approach, Docter, realizing that he has a pack of wild gags that have been kept leashed for too long, releases the lot in a flurry. We peek inside the mind of a dog, a cat, a prepubescent boy ("Girl! Girl!" the alarms sing out), and, best of all, the cool chick with eyeshadow at Riley's school, voiced by Rashida Jones. (Mind you, I would *die* for Rashida.) You start to wonder what a grownup sequel to "Inside Out" would look like, with a host of new feelings barging into central command and wrenching the controls away from Joy. Would Lust be spoken by Rupert Everett, or would it sound more like Chico Marx, working his way through a chorus line? How about Love of Money, or black-browed Mortal Terror? There are places, I guess, where even Pixar cannot go.

Bulky and bearded, a man lies alone in the dark. Flesh bulges at his waistband. He stirs like a bear emerging from hibernation, and we wonder what troubles may have roused him.

Handguns clutter a table beside him, as if they were coffee cups, and yet, even at this late hour, he takes the time to call his mother, and together they say a prayer. Such is the beginning of "Escobar: Paradise Lost," directed by Andrea Di Stefano. The big man is Pablo Escobar, the pasha of an international drug trade. The name has dwindled, these days, but there was a time when it was larded with awe and dread. "Medellin, Colombia—June 18, 1991," we read onscreen, and, just to prove it, Escobar's portable phone is a kind of metal baguette.

He is played by Benicio Del Toro, who is seldom easy to cast, especially as a lead, for his pleasure is to sidle into the action from the wings, with his sly and drowsy gaze and the viscous slur of his voice. That is why he made more of an impact in the bit part of Fenster, in "The Usual Suspects," than he did in four and a half hours, as the star of Steven Soderbergh's "Che." In "Escobar: Paradise Lost," Del Toro has finally found a character who fits him, and if there is a temptation to revel so heartily in the role that it bursts at the seams, he resists it. Early on, a bunch of nervous guys sit awaiting Escobar, whose status is not far short of a myth. Rather than make an entrance, however, he comes into the room as if he were one of them, wearing soccer shorts and conversing quietly. Likewise, the only weapon that we see him fire is a water pistol, in his swimming pool; if there must be blood, he has hirelings to do the shedding. Del Toro's whole performance is an education in the steady hum of power. Fear not the man who swaggers and

rants, he suggests, but the man who has no need to do so.

So why is Escobar not granted dominion over the film that bears his name? For some reason, what interests Di Stefano, consuming large portions of his movie, is the story of Nick (Josh Hutcherson), an aimless Canadian youth who hangs out on a Colombian beach and falls for a girl named Maria (Claudia Traisac). He is welcomed by her nice Uncle Pablo—none other than Escobar, who invites the couple to his estate, complete with stables, elephants, and a bullet-riddled car that belonged to Clyde Barrow. Nick, slow on the uptake, is a little bemused by the style in which Pablo likes to live. "How did he make all this money?" he asks Maria, obviously expecting her to say, "Dairy farming" or "Soft furnishings." His proud host, always at ease in the witching hour, wanders into Nick's bedroom one night and inquires, "Do you believe in God?" "Yes." "Take drugs?" "No." "That's good." Whether or not this counts as a job interview, Nick soon finds himself embroiled in the family business and unable to get out, at which point "Escobar: Paradise Lost" turns into a regulation thriller, equipped with shootings and sticks of dynamite. Meanwhile, everyone in the theatre is thinking: Given that I paid good money to learn about the world's most frightening cocaine king, why am I watching a movie about the world's most stupid Canadian? ♦

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CARTOON CAPTION CONTEST

Each week, we provide a cartoon in need of a caption. You, the reader, submit a caption, we choose three finalists, and you vote for your favorite. Caption submissions for this week's cartoon, by Frank Cotham, must be received by Sunday, June 28th. The finalists in the June 8th & 15th contest appear below. We will announce the winner, and the finalists in this week's contest, in the July 20th issue. The winner receives a signed print of the cartoon. Any resident of the United States, Canada (except Quebec), Australia, the United Kingdom, or the Republic of Ireland age eighteen or over can enter or vote. To do so, and to read the complete rules, visit contest.newyorker.com.

THE WINNING CAPTION



"You've achieved closure."
Darren Gersh, Chevy Chase, Md.



THE FINALISTS

"An optimist would see the room as half dry."
Mark Conacher, Toronto, Ont.

"Not everything is about you."
Eric Tobiason, Torrance, Calif.

"It was a partially dark and stormy night."
Kathryn El-Assal, Middleton, Wisc.

THIS WEEK'S CONTEST



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